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THE NEW

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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THE Imperial Conference is to spend most of its time discussing policy in the event of war. There is comparatively little enthusiasm about the practical steps which might be taken in the economic field to render the possibility of war more remote. The Ottawa trade agreements, as such, do not figure on the agenda; and though the principle of imperial preferences embodied in them can hardly be excluded from the deliberations of the assembled Commonwealth statesmen, there is no sign of any move in the direction of general revision of the Ottawa scheme. Canada has already concluded a new bilateral trade pact with the United Kingdom; fresh agreements made separately with Australia, South Africa and India seem likely to follow in due course. Since not merely Mr. Mackenzie King but Mr. Lyons of Australia, appears to recognise the urgency of the need to remove some of the existing impediments to trade, the gradual emergence of a more liberal tariff policy within the Empire may perhaps be expected. But unless the British Government is prepared to give a lead, instead of using its Ottawa commitments as an excuse for obstructing any movement towards freer trade, there is little likelihood of the Conference reversing a policy which has cost Britain much more in loss of foreign trade than she has gained in her commercial dealings with the Dominions. General Hertzog, at the opening session, made a cogent plea for an Empire policy of "economic appeasement." But if there is to be no material reduction in the tariff walls erected round the Commonwealth against foreign trade—and notably against U.S.A. manufactures—it is hard to see how this aspiration is to be translated into action.

Imperial Defence

When it comes to questions of defence and foreign policy none of the Dominions is willing to underwrite any British commitments in Europe other than such general liabilities as arise from membership of the League. If it be argued by the British spokesmen that the realities of the situation demand, in Britain's case, that the protective clauses of the Covenant should be reinforced with more intimate special understandings, the Dominions—remote from the European imbroglio and critical of Britain's share in the general failure to make collective security work—will insist on complete autonomy in foreign affairs. Canada, in particular, may be regarded as functioning within the American rather than the British orbit, so far as foreign policy is concerned; but there is no possibility of any Dominion pledging itself to fight again in a European war which might be waged for interests alien to those of its own citizens. Proposals, therefore, for co-operation in Imperial Defence are likely to be discussed on regional lines. For Australia and New Zealand the obvious "sphere of

interest" lies in the Pacific and the Far East with Singapore and Hong-Kong as focal points for co-operative strategy. In the case of South Africa the increasing insecurity of Mediterranean shipping communications makes it essential to concert plans for the protection of the alternative route to the East *via* the Cape of Good Hope. The Union Government has already agreed to establish and defend at Simonstown a base for use by the British fleet. It remains to discuss South Africa's contribution to a system of defensive air bases covering the Cape route. In any such system, however, French co-operation is essential, especially in view of Fascist domination of the Canaries and Rio de Oro ; and for such co-operation France may well be inclined to ask a price.

Spain Goes Moderate

Some change of persons became inevitable in the Spanish Republican Cabinet after the Barcelona rising. There was much criticism of Señor Caballero, because this ageing man took decisions slowly, had become inert and inaccessible, but none the less retained in his own hands the Ministry of War. Since he trusted to a political Supreme Council of War and had no adequate General Staff, the result was that a central command hardly existed. As he chose to insist on retaining this vital Ministry as well as the Premiership, the result has been his disappearance. The new Cabinet under Dr. Negrin (a moderate Socialist, by profession a biologist) will first of all bring unity and decision into the central command. Let us hope that it may still be in time to save Bilbao. Señor Prieto, who has done well at the Air Ministry, should be a good Minister of Defence. In the second place the new Cabinet marks an emphatic move towards moderation. The Anarchists and the C.N.T. drop out altogether, and the Liberal Republicans hold a relatively higher number of posts. It is said that the Cortes will again be called together, to underline the democratic and parliamentary character of the Republic. It is even possible that some cautious steps may be taken to restore the exercise of the Catholic religion. That the Communist Party took a leading part in this development will surprise no one who reads the article in this issue by Mr. H. N. Brailsford, who has just returned from Spain.

Diplomatic Talks

The diplomatic stocktaking and discussions begun in London last week have spread now, as ministers and ambassadors go home, to the Continent. What, if anything, may come of these, no one can be sure. Mr. Litvinov has been assured by MM. Blum and Delbos in Paris that the Franco-Soviet pact stands firm—in its present carefully limited form—and the British Government, it is said, maintain their favourable, if unenthusiastic, attitude towards both this and the pacts with Poland and Czechoslovakia. On the latter of these an important statement was made at Prague at the week-end when a French delegate declared, on M. Blum's behalf, that if an attack were made on Czechoslovakia, France would act as though she herself were being attacked. In Central Europe there are renewed hopes, following the talks of Austrian, Czech and Hungarian representatives, of "Danubian co-operation." Hungary will doubtless want to make her own terms for entering into closer relations with Czechoslovakia. Italian influence, which works in the other direction, is still strong in Budapest, and the visit this week of King Victor Emmanuel, accompanied by Count Ciano, may have considerable political significance. But the Hungarians are not so warm about an Italy joined with Germany by the "Rome-Berlin axis."

Mussolini Beats the Big Drum

The Duce is still in a nasty temper with Britain. Commonsense and the representations of our Ambassador have apparently persuaded him to abate the fury of the anti-British campaign in the Italian press, and to allow regular subscribers to receive their newspapers from England. But the ban on the circulation of the British papers in general is still in force as we write. The reports of the Coronation served out to the public by the Italian papers were fantastic—with their headlines of accidents, disorder and disaffection. And as a climax Fascist spleen was vented on France, which the *Corriere della Sera* a few days ago declared, with many jeers, had "become a fief of the Crown of England." Meanwhile, Mussolini beats the big drum of Imperialism and autarky. In a speech in Rome on Sunday, he expatiated on the progress towards the goal of self-sufficiency which Italy had made, and pointed to Abyssinia as the land of Canaan. He admitted that it would be a hard task to extract all the milk or honey—or to be precise, the coffee and cotton and precious metals—but it would be achieved by the tenacity of Italians working 25 hours a day. We look forward to seeing this Eighth Wonder of the world! There are, by the way, some valuable raw materials in another country in which Mussolini is interested, and it seems likely that the revolt in Southern Albania has more to do with the recent grant to Italy of oil concessions there than with a hypothetical "Communism."

Trotskyism in the U.S.S.R.

Another offensive in the struggle against Trotskyism is going on in the U.S.S.R., where a number of Trade Union leaders have just been arrested, charged with embezzlement of funds and other crimes against the State and the workers. Drastic reforms in the Trade Union system are also talked about, tending apparently in the direction of increased "workers' control" and limiting of the power of officials. More spectacular is the new decree for the establishment of military councils in the various districts of the country. This scheme, so far as can be judged, will enhance and concentrate the power of the Red Army and at the same time restore the diminished authority exercised by the political commissars. The functions of the new councils appear to extend over a wide field, covering not merely military affairs in the narrower sense, but civilian work of various kinds. The whole reform presumably marks the solidarity of the Red Army and the Kremlin, of Voroshilov and Stalin, and it is, according to the Soviet press, an essential move in the campaign to liquidate Trotskyism. We were reproached for suggesting a few months ago that this so-called Trotskyism, or discontent with "Stalinism," was not confined to a handful of malcontents. It seems—and we regret it—that our surmise was right. We hope that the campaign, in so far as it is directed against real mischief and crime, will be successful—and that it is not going to take as heavy a toll of the innocent as of the guilty.

New Moves in the U.S.A.

In their separate spheres Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. John L. Lewis have both run up against "snags" this week. From the President's standpoint the Supreme Court has displayed an inconvenient tendency to reform itself. Not merely has Mr. Justice Van Devanter—one of the five septuagenarian die-hards—retired, but the Court has given two decisions in the Administration's favour. One upholds the Louisiana tax on chain stores; under the other there will be no need for the Treasury to refund the billion dollars collected through the "processing" taxes under the invalidated A.A.A. Opponents of the proposals to liberalise the Court by increasing its membership are now arguing that the President is beating at an open door, and the Judiciary Committee of the Senate has turned the Bill down by 10 votes to 8. Mr. Roosevelt's attitude may depend to some extent on the Court's pending decision on the Social Security Act. But even if that be favourable, he seems unlikely to drop completely his reform plan. Mr. Lewis' problem is the stiffening of resistance against his drive to unionise the employees of the "independent" steel producers, whom he designs apparently to tackle in turn. After a one-day strike he induced Jones and Laughlin—the first firm put "on the spot"—to sign an agreement providing for a ballot among their 27,000 workers to decide whether the S.W.O.C. shall have exclusive bargaining rights on their behalf. But the two largest "independents," Republic Steel and Youngstown Sheet, have declared that rather than submit to C.I.O. dictation they will shut down indefinitely. It remains to be seen whether, in that case, they can effectively be cited under the Wagner (Labour Relations) Act.

The Harworth Deadlock

The Nottinghamshire coalowners, following their policy of non-recognition of the Mineworkers' Federation of Great Britain to the last, have refused to accept the collective notice to terminate contracts put in by the Notts Miners' Association, and are trying to insist on individual strike notices, which would plainly make everyone who presented them a marked man. At law, the owners have possibly a right to insist on individual notices; but the tendering of collective notices has been long a custom of the trade, and is in effect a part of the system of collective bargaining from which the Notts owners and the Spencer Union have broken away. This "custom of the trade" might well be pleaded on the men's side if any attempt were made to charge them with breach of contract for striking without legal notice. But that issue should not arise; and we presume the owners will accept in fact, even if they refuse in theory, the collective notice tendered by the N.M.A. As for the prospects of a strike, nothing has happened so far to make them less. The owners are still refusing to meet the M.F.G.B., unless it binds itself in advance to accept the results of arbitration on any matter that cannot be settled by agreement. The miners, on the other hand, still demand an unconditional meeting; and the Government, though a new "peace move" is said now to be on the way, has up to the time of writing done nothing towards removing the deadlock. A national strike, therefore, seems likely in a week's time—on a vital matter of Trade Union principle which does not easily admit of compromise.

The Busmen Persist

The London omnibus strike is still in being, and no move has been made for some days towards getting negotiations resumed. The busmen are now calling earnestly upon the tramway and trolley-bus workers to come out in sympathy, whereas the Union headquarters is still ordering them to remain at work. These other sections, for their part, want, if they come out, to demand the seven-and-a-half hours day for themselves, and not merely to give sympathetic support to the busmen. One difficulty in the way is that they are under an agreement which is not due to expire till next year; so that they cannot strictly put forward at present any demands of their own. On the other hand, if they strike in their own cause, they are less liable to incur penalties under the Act of 1927 than if they come out merely in sympathy with the busmen. The longer the stoppage lasts, the harder it is bound to be to keep the other grades at work, both because of the strain imposed on them by the huge increase in traffic by tram and trolley-bus, and also because they cannot help feeling that they are helping the Board to defeat the busmen's movement. The true remedy for the whole trouble, as we pointed out last week, is to amend the absurd London Passenger Transport Act. But this the Government, despite the continuance of the dispute, is apparently not prepared to consider.

Co-operators in Conference

The Co-operative Congress at Bath, though it was denied the customary civic welcome by the Mayor, settled down to business none the worse. The agreement recently concluded between the Co-operative Party and the Labour Party was duly endorsed; for, even if no one greatly liked it, no one had any alternative to propose. The Co-operative Party cannot win seats save as the ally of the Labour Party; but it refuses to merge itself in the Labour Party. The two must therefore work together on terms of mutual convenience, and settle differences as they arise. On general matters of policy the Congress once more affirmed its desire for a move towards freer international trade, and also recorded its hostility to the Government's quota and marketing schemes, on the ground that they tend to check co-operative development by sharing out the market among the existing producers. Co-operators object to the marketing schemes also on account of their failure to give representation to the consumers, as, for the same reason, they reject the alternative proposal that control should be vested in "impartial commissions nominated by the Government." What they want instead is less clear; indeed, they seem more concerned with safeguarding their own movement's right to expand than with proposing any method of organising marketing or production. Another question considered by the Congress was the growth of fixed price stores, paying low wages and thus unfairly threatening Co-operative growth. In this matter the appropriate remedy is clearly a Trade Board, with full power to fix hours as well as wages, unless a satisfactory regulation of hours is achieved by direct legislation prescribing a statutory maximum for all distributive workers.

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MAGIC OR COMMON SENSE

THE holiday is over and the ritual complete. The King is anointed and crowned. Everyone has had a good time. The crowds have surged into the West-end and are returning to their homes in the remotest parts of the Commonwealth and to Killicrankie, Cardiff, Puddleton, Brixton and Bow. The Dominion Premiers have stayed on to tackle the grim task of deciding to what extent and under what conditions they will tax their people to arm the Empire. In the countryside bonfires have blazed and the village sports have been run. In the great thoroughfares and the mean streets alike the flags and the bunting, now a little draggled in the rain, still remind us that England for a week at least has touched the carnival spirit. About the fun and general good-humour there can be no dispute. A well-known American journalist, whose letter we publish this week, was so impressed by the spontaneity of the cheering, by the absence of any "sour note," that he concludes that England alone knows nothing of Left or Right, that it has achieved the "United Front." He expected a "pleasant anachronism" and found a religion.

Now it is true that the voice of republicanism, lusty until sixty years ago, is no longer vigorous in England; it is true that people cheer as the Coronation procession passes, not because they fear the police, but because they feel enthusiasm. About something or other connected with monarchy British opinion is well-nigh unanimous. But what is this that we are unanimous about?

Most people of all ages and classes enjoy a traditional ceremony carried out with pomp and pageantry; we like to be reminded of our history and to be offered a rare opportunity of carnival. Anyone may see in the Coronation a harmless and pleasant festival maintained in the same spirit with which we celebrate Christmas or All Hallows' Eve; we may cherish the Regalia, along with the bishop's apron and the Lord Chancellor's woolsack, and retain the monarchy, partly because we are a conservative people who cherish tradition, and partly because it still plays a largely formal, but convenient, part in the scheme of Government. If we could leave the matter there only the doctrinnaire or the spoil-sport would think it worth while to criticise. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to enjoy the pantomime, the fanfare of trumpets, the fine music and the gorgeous costumes merely as a pleasant piece of pageantry. There is a spirit abroad which labours this interesting survival into a solemn occasion of portentous significance, and which tries in effect to use the Coronation for its own propagandist purpose.

The pretence that something mystical, inexplicable, transcendental and magical has occurred during the Coronation celebrations has been implicit in innumerable articles, speeches and sermons during the last few weeks. It is possible, as our "This England" column shows, to find people in the twentieth century who still believe in the "royal touch" and solemnly discuss the phenomenon of "king's weather" (so oddly unresponsive on this occasion), but these things might perhaps have been regarded as negligible aberrations had we not been confronted with the astonishing leading article that appeared in the *Times* on the day of the Coronation.

The well-informed leader writer of the *Times* was, of course, perfectly aware of the historical meaning of the Coronation ritual. He noted its origins in dim antiquity, the features that are familiar to anthropologists who have studied the coronation ritual used when kings are crowned in Fiji, when royal chiefs ascend the throne in darkest Africa, and which reached their greatest elaboration in the ritual that attended the anointing of Brahmanic priest-kings. He showed that in the Coronation ceremony the anointed king dies and is reborn, is "a sacramental, even a sacrificial, man" who lives for his people and for his people sometimes "must sacramentally die." He notes that in the Coronation ritual the King of England is treated as a priest as well as a king. Anthropologically considered, the Coronation ceremony is a piece of magic, the magic which brings prosperity, and which is familiar in England in the song of John Barleycorn.

It was pleasant enough to find the *Times* reminding us of all this; we like to trace the origin of our customs and to smile in gratification as we realise what a long way we have advanced towards more rational conceptions.

Unfortunately, the object of the *Times* in reminding us of the anthropological basis of the Coronation was not to smile at the common conservatism of men who like to maintain forms when reality has changed, nor was it to warn us against the deadly danger of superstition. On the contrary, its aim was apparently to increase superstition, to persuade men, who might otherwise take a common-sense view of their institutions, that something magical had really taken place and that what we have all been brought up to dismiss as mumbo-jumbo in Central Africa had somehow become something very serious and efficacious when imported into Westminster Abbey. The *Times* leader writer was no doubt sincere when he suggested that some mystical virtues did in fact proceed from the sprinkling of oil on the chest and hands and head of the King, when he said that once "the King had sat in that chair and passed through that experience" he "must rise up something other than he had been," and that when the Archbishop went in under the canopy over the King's chair "bearing the consecrated oil as in the tabernacle, it seemed that those two men were alone with God, performing an act greater than they knew, more solemn than any person present could hope to understand." But such language, appropriate enough in the time of the Stuarts, sounds odd in the traditionally Protestant columns of the *Times*. Those who have abandoned the belief in the Real Presence in the Sacrament might be expected to distinguish in the Coronation between the symbolic use of ceremonial and the primitive conception of the magic efficacy of ritualistic and cabalistic words.

It is true that men in all ages have associated the idea of kingship with their idea of the patronage of a tribe, and it is true that the rationalistic republican has too often failed to realise the instinctive enjoyment which people find in ceremony and pageantry. It is true too, that men do not necessarily become more rational because they have become republican. It is a delusion, which is dispelled by a glance at any modern dictatorship, that a republic is necessarily more rational than a country which maintains a ceremonial and symbolical king. We could quote phrases from German papers, closely parallel to those which we have noticed in the *Times*, to show that Hitler

is regarded as a sacrificial character bearing in his person the sins and sufferings of the German people. But it is just this natural tendency of man to relapse into superstition which it is the business of a responsible newspaper like the *Times* to counteract and check. Through a long evolutionary process men have learnt to see through the magic rituals which were once the centre of tribal life; they know now that to put on masks and join in a sacred dance will not change the weather or make the crops grow. They know to-day, if they think about it, that if we are to solve the problems of war and poverty and misery, we need to be just as practical and as scientific in our understanding of the conditions of society as an agriculturist is to-day when he ploughs and irrigates the land. The *Times* and many other papers in its wake would prevent, if they could, the mass of mankind from understanding the causes of class division, the reasons why men are hungry in the midst of potential plenty. If we can be made sufficiently conscious of national unity, our leaders, magicians and wise men will be blessed, as the prayer in the Abbey put it, with "a quiet Empire." Therefore the more we are deluded into magic and the less we understand our symbols the better for the powers that be. But it is dangerous to encourage hysteria and superstition. The reaction against reason and common sense has already, as the *Times* constantly remarks, gone to extravagant lengths in Europe. What is the use of prating about the preservation of democracy in England if our leading newspapers turn their backs on reason, abandon the progress of centuries and deface our "pleasant anachronisms" with the revival of magic and the cultivation of Abracadabra?

ANARCHISTS AND COMMUNISTS IN SPAIN

LOOKING down from a 'plane over Barcelona a week ago I saw the tramcars moving along the Ramblas and the factory chimneys smoking. It was true, then, that the rising had been suppressed and order restored. This achievement, however, had cost the lives of 900 men who ought to have been facing Franco, while the wounded on both sides, following an authoritative but confidential estimate, numbered 2,500. This was by far the gravest of several armed encounters between the Democratic Republic and the forces of Social Revolution: one is not sure that it will be the last. So profound is the gulf between the thinking of Spanish Anarchists and the moderates of the People's Front that the marvel is rather that the struggle has been so long postponed. For this delay the Valencia Government has to thank as much the virtues of the Anarchists as their failings. Their leaders, in spite of a feud that dated from the days of Bakunin and Marx, had had the magnanimity to join both the Republican and the Catalonian Governments. Down to the day of the Barcelona rising, and even after it, all their official utterances were persuasive pleas for unity and even for fusion. When they did argue their case in print it was with courtesy and restraint. Their failing is deliberate, high-principled indiscipline. When at last they struck in Barcelona it was without the support of their formidable mass organisation, the C.N.T. Trade Union federation. Two only of the organisations on its fringes (the Friends of Durruti and the Libertarian Youth) manned the barricades, in alliance with the Marxists of P.O.U.M. Had the C.N.T. with all its armed forces attempted to seize power in the early days of the civil war it could have won Catalonia and held it—until the inevitable foreign intervention. For these feuds provoke two nightmares. They may open the weakly held Aragon front to a Fascist offensive. They may also serve as an excuse for an Italian or even an international occupation of Barcelona, on the plea that this great city with its many and wealthy foreign concerns is a prey to anarchy. The prompt action of the Valencia Government has removed both these dangers. But can it in this poisoned atmosphere advance over the corpses of hundreds of dead workers to its positive ends—the disarmament of the civilian population and the fusing of the volunteer party militias into a regular army? It might have been managed if Premier Caballero had himself gone to Barcelona and used his magnetism and his legend to win the workers. It cannot be done by force alone.

Several factors went to the making of this rising. Catalonia is intensely nationalist and with difficulty identifies her cause with that of Spain. She smashed her own local Fascism in the first week of the civil war; her mood ever since has been that of a victor. Her own territory is free, and she feels only a moderate interest in the distant Aragon Front, which her forces hold. For lack of 'planes, tanks and artillery (as she sees it) she can undertake no hopeful offensive there, and for this she blames Russia even more bitterly than the Valencia Government. They will not (she says) give arms to Anarchists, because they mean to crush them when victory is won. It was even said that the International Column was raised for this purpose. To these charges Valencia has three answers. First, arms even now are scarce, and must be reserved for the vital fronts. Secondly, the Anarchist militia is so undisciplined that to give it modern arms would be to waste them. Thirdly, in fact the Anarchists have plenty of arms, including tanks and artillery, but they keep them for use against their more moderate comrades.

Under these arguments, as I realised during a stay in Barcelona, lurked a cruder struggle for power. When the civil war broke out, the anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T. was, with its reputed membership of about a million, the dominant power in Catalonia. But in nine months the United Socialist and Communist Party has by brilliant organisation raised the local membership of its rival Trade Union federation, the U.G.T., to some 450,000. The C.N.T., struggling to be loyal, felt its power slipping from it. It manœuvred unskilfully; it claimed additional representation and even a majority in the Catalonian Ministry; its gangster fringe (for gunmen and bandits mingle in its undisciplined ranks with idealists who carry on the ethical tradition of Godwin and Proudhon) murdered in the week before the rising two U.G.T. Ministers, Roldan and Sese: finally its Left Wing lost patience and made its bid for power.

But the real issue lay deeper. This was, like the Spartacist tragedy in Berlin, a struggle between Reformism and the will to make a proletarian revolution. P.O.U.M., which rose in alliance with the Anarchist Left, had been involved with incredible bitterness in this struggle, ever since the formation of the People's Front. It represented the older and now heretical Communist position. It opposed any alliance with the middle-class even for the salvation of the Republic: for the sake of political as distinct from social democracy it would make no sacrifices to unity. Against it, far more fiercely than against the Anarchists, the Communists waged a merciless feud, and charged it with all the treasons ascribed to Trotsky. Of these it was doubtless innocent, but it behaved with reckless, partisan folly. Its leader, Nin, was calling on the eve of the rising for the instant convocation of a constituent assembly of workers, peasants and soldiers. Its newspaper backed the rising. Yet the Anarchists with whom it allied itself stand farther from its unbending Marxism than do the Socialists whom it assailed with its tanks and guns stolen from Government arsenals.

To grasp this situation one must realise that the Communists now constitute the moderate Centre Party in republican Spain. Their propaganda, as skilful as it is pervasive, is almost exclusively defensive. It focuses attention on resistance to Fascism and on a concentrated effort to win the war: it discourages talk about the future, and ridicules its allies' weakness for "plans and projects." I have before me a pamphlet by its secretary, José Diaz, which defines its

objective as the creation of "a democratic and parliamentary republic of a new type." The novelty of this conception is not easy to grasp, for Diaz goes on to insist that the chief task is to destroy the material foundations of Spanish feudalism—the vast aristocratic estates, the political and economic power of the Church, and the old army based on caste. Something is added, in much vaguer words, about the need for breaking up the financial oligarchy and nationalising the Bank of Spain, but it is obvious that industry will be socialised, if at all, only partially and with extreme caution. The enemy, in short, is feudalism and less certainly big business, but small property, whether in town or country, need have no fear.

I discussed this policy with several leading Communists. They justified it mainly on two grounds. Spain is a land of peasants, who own their few acres, save in the south and west, where the great estates predominate. They cannot be driven forcibly to accept socialisation—an experiment which the Anarchists have tried in Aragon with disastrous results. Again, the support of the small middle class is essential, if the war is to be won. In fact, the country was very evenly divided by the test of votes in February, 1936; the Republic dare not throw away potential support from any quarter. Secondly, it dare not antagonise the Western democracies by unfurling the flag of proletarian revolution. This had the ring of everyday common sense, though I reflected that Lenin brushed aside very similar arguments in 1917. As one listened to Franco's guns in Madrid and read the news from Bilbao, this prudent moderation was intelligible. It certainly sprang as much from a study of the particular case of Spain, as from any consideration of Russian interests.

These, the reader may object, are opportunist arguments; but will not the Communist Party, with or without its Socialist allies, revert to its revolutionary policy when victory is won? That is, one supposes, the reckoning on which the British Government bases its hostility to the Republic. I think this development must be permanent. This prediction I base on the social composition of the Communist Party both in Catalonia (where it is fused with the Socialists) and in Spain. It retains the discipline for which it is famous; it can by its immensely skilful propaganda through posters, periodicals and broadcasting compel the average man to think its thoughts. It has rendered incomparable services in waging the war, and it shares the gratitude that Russia has justly earned. But it is no longer primarily a party of the industrial workers or even a Marxist Party. One of its leading men was describing to me its admirable work in setting up reading rooms, clubs and political schools for the army. "What do you teach?" I asked. "The fundamentals of Marxism?" "Well, no," he answered, "the instruction is all on People's Front lines." Again in Catalonia a leading Communist was explaining the rapid growth of the U.G.T. "Much of the new membership," he said, "has come from the ranks of the Esquerra (Left Middle-class Republicans). The small middle-class realises that of the two parties ours is the stouter defender of small property." The claim was true. In next day's newspaper I read a report of a gathering of retail tradesmen in Barcelona. It was the U.G.T. which saved them from the plans of socialisation backed by the Anarchist C.N.T.

The growth of the Party has been astonishingly rapid during the civil war. Insignificant in numbers when that began, the Party is now, or soon will be, the leading political organisation in republican Spain. In nine months it has quadrupled its membership, which now stands at 249,000 in governmental Spain, exclusive of Catalonia. Its social composition is unusual—89,000 industrial workers as against 62,000 agricultural workers, 76,000 peasant owners, 15,000 "middle class" and 7,000 "intellectuals," together with 19,000 women. Its vigorous youth organisation has in round figures 300,000 members. This intense activity in recruiting provoked protests from other parties. It struck me that these new members could not have been sifted and tested with the care customary in the early years of the Party. In fairness I will give the crushing answer of the organiser to whom I put this objection. On November 7th, at the worst hour of Madrid's peril, the Party called together its new members in that city. They numbered 2,000 men. Of these 1,700 volunteered for the militia. They had to stand under fire, unarmed in reserve, waiting till they could receive a rifle from a dead man's hand. Of these 1,700 no fewer than 900 were killed in the defence of Madrid. He went on to illustrate the Party's share in the risks and labours of the active army. In three brigades on the Cordova front respectively 80, 50 and 95 per cent. of the men were its members.

It is a tangled tale, this Spanish epic. The heroism of simple men, who have flung their lives away for the joy of battling half-armed against feudalism, blends with the vanity of leaders and the egoism of parties. Doctrinal feuds that our grandfathers waged in learned tomes arm themselves with machine-guns and wreak mass-murder in the streets. I have tried to describe without judging. But when memory goes back to the bloody defeats of 1934, and faces frankly the forces that then so nearly crushed the Spanish workers, I think they were wise to form their People's Front. Once formed, it was pledged in loyalty, as in prudence, to moderation. When one has seen something of the palaces of the grandees and the hovels of the peasants, to make an end of feudalism seems no small achievement. With this will come much else—education for the masses, an expansion of all the social services, co-operation among the producing peasants, workers' councils in the factories, and, above all, a new sense of national unity and ambition. To this new Spain the Anarchists, if their gunmen can but be weeded out, have much to contribute. Liberty is their passion, though they have loved her in day-dreams; they too, though they scorned discipline and system, have learned to give their all to the common good. With all its failings this nation can boast that, when at last it is roused to action, it acts with a will and endures to the end.

[*To be concluded.*]

H. N. BRAILSFORD

A LONDON DIARY

I first heard Philip Snowden speak at the Cambridge Union just after the war. Nothing that has passed since—two Labour Governments, the crisis of 1931, the National Government and all the rest of it—has effaced or substantially modified that first impression. The motion was something about the Labour Party being a class party. Snowden began his speech with an acid and unanswerable demonstration that political parties always do represent class interests. He clipped his words between his lips as if his mouth was a trap. His lips were the thinnest and tightest of any I ever saw. "Grit" was the word that came into my head when I saw him. Here was a man of courage and tenacity, of great ability, concentrated purpose, manifest integrity and terrific fighting quality. He was capable, I have since learnt, of almost anything good except generosity. He could never be the victim of the aristocratic embrace, could never be cajoled or bought, could never have a great personal following like MacDonald. His adversaries and colleagues would respect and fear him; he was too bitter easily to win affection. No two men could have been more dissimilar than MacDonald and Snowden; they worked together for a lifetime to build the Labour Party without, I believe, ever liking or understanding each other. Snowden, the Yorkshireman, liked everything clean cut; his contempt for MacDonald's rhetoric and Scottish metaphysics appears over and over again in his *Autobiography*. In that bleak and self-centred book, written in his old age, his analysis of MacDonald's leadership in 1924 and his handling of the Zinoviev letter is as merciless as his analysis of his Labour colleagues in 1931. The only member of the 1929–31 Cabinet whose shortcomings he glosses over is himself.

* * *

I want to be very clear on this point. The 1931 Labour Cabinet was not a good Cabinet and it got into an awful

muddle. But the people who got it into that muddle were MacDonald and Snowden who, by a strange irony, were the two who got most of the credit. According to our very odd system most of the members of the Cabinet know nothing about financial policy. Mr. Chamberlain, for instance, told the Cabinet nothing about his abortive excess profits tax until the eve of the Budget speech. Mr. Snowden was even more secretive. Until the crisis actually arose he had done nothing to avert it except utter an almost casual warning in the House of Commons in February and agree to pacify the Liberals (a colleague tells me that it was treated as a joke at the time) by setting up the May Committee. For months economists who understood the situation told me privately that Snowden would listen to nothing; he had a formula which, I am told, he constantly repeated at the Economic Advisory Council. It began: "I can imagine nothing that would be so detrimental to the interests of this country. . . ." The responsibility for the 1931 crisis was Snowden's; no one else except presumably the Prime Minister knew what was happening until it was too late. It was this fact, never realised by the public, that created such terrible bitterness, and it is this fact that Snowden glossed over at the time and in his *Autobiography*. I think Snowden's obstinate refusal to listen to any advice and then the astonishing venom of his speeches and letters to the press during the election of 1931 are partly to be attributed to an illness which is painful and disturbing to the judgment. One certainly needs some such explanation for the "Bolshevism Run Mad" broadcast—probably the most effective political speech ever made. For in this speech Snowden denounced with all his astonishing power of invective all the opinions of his lifetime, described as Bolshevism and madness the mild Fabian Socialism of which he was one of the most effective living exponents. Snowden's change of sides had nothing to do with the "aristocratic embrace"; Snowden was not the man to be cajoled or tricked, and in a few months he was denouncing his new colleagues as bitterly and immoderately for a tariff policy (which inevitably followed the 1931 election) as he had just denounced his Labour colleagues. It was a strange and unhappy ending to a great career.

* * *

Describing my recent conversation with Trotsky in Mexico City some weeks ago I quoted his assurance that his "archives" contained important new evidence of the falsity of the charges brought against him at the Moscow trial. I see from reports that the "sub-commission," headed by Dr. John Dewey, has visited Trotsky in the beautiful room where I found him writing his *Crimes of Stalin*, and that it was shown very few original documents. The archives were mainly copies or material already printed. The fullest reports of this unofficial process have been in Communist papers like *New Masses*, which had two representatives present who contributed to the issue of April 27th a most amusing and devastating account of the "sub-commission's" efforts. But I must not take too much notice of *New Masses*—it starts with the kind of prejudice against Trotsky that a man paddling feels for a crocodile that insists on sharing the same strip of water. The undoubted fact is that Carleton Beales, who was more likely to be objective and thorough than any other member of the Commission (which contained several avowed Trotskyites), resigned in the middle because the chairman seemed to regard any awkward questions as impolite to Trotsky and because, as Beales explained, he would necessarily, at the end of such an inquiry, be just as uncertain of Trotsky's innocence or guilt as he was at the beginning. At which Trotsky called him a paid agent of the G.P.U. and Beales made a suitable retort about "incipient paranoia" and "persecution mania." All very unedifying and unhelpful. I am particularly sorry to hear that nothing came of the inquiries from foreign Governments, which Trotsky and his secretary both told me about. The authoritative statement from the French police about Trotsky's whereabouts when he was in France would really have been useful. As it is I can't see that the Trotsky inquiry is likely to produce anything to alter anyone's opinion about the truth of the confessions at the Moscow trial. The effect on thoughtful people will be to raise further doubt of the reliability of Trotsky for anything, but few of us will really be sure whether he was the centre of a great international Fascist plot until either he or the Soviet Government manages to produce some much better evidence from their "archives."

* * *

I have heard of plants being "coronated"—that is to say, possessing a corona—but until I went to a News Reel last week I never knew that kings were coronated. This type of verbal back-formation is, I think, characteristic of America—where you are no longer obliged to do your duty, you are merely obligated. My natural conservatism finds these novelties unnecessary and offensive. Yet on Sunday when I heard for the second time of the King being coronated and the speaker was a grizzled member of the local dart team, the word struck me as agreeably bucolic. But I hope that Puck will not in future be made to say of Titania that she "coronates him with flowers and makes him all her joy," or Hector that "the end coronates all." Another solecism has cropped up in the *Times*, which is usually so nice in its language, but in the last week has given us twice "all the panoply."

* * *

The success of the Penguin and the Pelican sixpenny books in a world which has been made safe for Hollywood and the *Daily Mirror* is prodigiously encouraging to those who can still cherish the hope of seeing an educated proletariat. The latest editions to the series include Shaw's *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism*, which contains 16,000 words on the totalitarian systems in addition to the original Guide. Elie Halévy's *History of the English People* is another important book now in the series, also Wells' *Short History of the World*. I strongly recommend Mr. Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men*, one of the few really first-rate scientific romances that have ever been written.

* * *

A correspondent writes to tell me of an incident that occurred on his way home the other evening from watching the crowds cheering the King on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. As he passed the crowds admiring Selfridges' monumental masonry "symbolising the triumph of business enterprise over good taste," he heard a police sergeant say to a curious stranger: "No, Madam, I doubt if Mr. Selfridge will appear on the balcony to-night." CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Mr. G. L. Beach.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

"Unemployed people ought not to be allowed to keep dogs," said Major C. R. Randolph, the chairman at Droxford (Hants) Police Court to-day.—*Bournemouth Daily Echo.*

For some unexplained reason God loves the English, much as he loved the Children of Israel.—*The Aeroplane*

Should we stand in our own houses when we hear "God Save the King" on the wireless? What do other people do?—Letter in *Sunday Graphic.*

At a meeting of the Star of Morice (Plymouth) Lodge of the International Order of Good Templars a protest was made against the Speaker's Coach at the Coronation being drawn by brewery horses.—*Daily Express.*

Hundreds of them sat on the litter-strewn stands facing the Palace gates. Despite the fact that the King and Queen were not in London, there were crowds outside the Palace all day, and sentry-beats had to be kept clear by extra police.

Pressing against the railings, the crowd watched the windows. No one seemed to know what they expected to see, but they gazed hopefully for hours and occasionally they cheered.—*News Chronicle.*

JAPAN'S HOPES OF BRITISH FRIENDSHIP

HOWEVER loudly her patriots may proclaim the greatness and invincibility of Japan, and their belief in her " divine mission " to rule the lesser breeds of Asia, there have always been voices demanding that she should not mortally offend her Big White Brother of the West. These so-called moderates have recently re-established their ascendancy over the extremist military elements, and are doing their utmost to show that Japan has abandoned her aggressive policies, wants to put Sino-Japanese relations on a " friendly " basis and is now pursuing a policy mindful of foreign—in particular British—interests in China. It is not that the " moderates " are any less determined than the " extremists " to acquire the hegemony of China, but Japan's financial and economic situation to-day is such as to force her to make a determined bid for British political and financial support. The present Japanese Government, for all its military complexion, is clearly under the control of the millionaires of finance, trade and industry, allied with the old conservative type of army men and civil bureaucrats. The " young officer " element has been pushed into the background. The general election just held was little more than a farce, since the business interests which " own " the major political parties had by the beginning of this year reached a compromise with those who now control the Army.

Neither the moderates nor the extremists want to share China with anyone, but Japan must somehow get political and financial support from the British Empire if she is to complete the conquest of China and develop its resources for her own benefit. It might seem that no British imperialist could seriously consider the terms on which Japan wants an understanding with this country, for all she has to offer for a British blessing on her conquest of China, and for freer access to British Empire markets, is her services as policeman in East Asia. We alone, say the Japanese year in and year out, can maintain the peace of Asia ; we alone are strong, disciplined and religious, and so capable of combating Communism, disorder and anarchy in the Far East. British Conservatives are generally inclined to listen to the Japanese plea to be allowed to " civilise " Asia, and the British in Shanghai welcomed her efforts in that direction when she destroyed Chapei in 1932. Accordingly, the moment Japan declares her intention of being less aggressive there is a strong tendency to welcome her back with open arms as a beloved mistress, who has indeed behaved in a rash and misguided manner, but should be forgiven on the first signs of repentance.

The recent announcement that conversations are shortly to be opened with the British Government by the Japanese Ambassador in London " to see whether a basis for Anglo-Japanese co-operation in China can be found " has been welcomed by the *Times* and other Conservative papers. In a leading article of May 3rd, the *Times* said that " Britain is fully prepared to recognise the obvious fact of Japan's ' special position ' in regard to China." Apparently so long as Japan sets about the consolidation and extension of her Chinese interests without actually seizing Chinese territory she will not " lack sympathy and assistance from this country." The Japanese proposals, according to the *Sunday Times*, involve recognition of Japan's special economic and *strategic* interests in North China and a joint loan by Britain, Japan, the U.S.A. and France to China.

There would appear to be little doubt that preparations are being made for a deal with Japan which will secure for her virtually all she wants in China. Her " special economic and strategic interests " in North China once admitted, she will be in a position—backed by British capital—to dig herself into North China economically until she is strong enough to annex it openly. The history of Manchuria will be repeated. In fact what is really afoot is a disguised partition of China.

The present Japanese Government has been showing signs of " repentance " ever since it came into office. The Foreign Minister has spoken of the need to negotiate with China on a basis of equality—a shocking enough statement to the minds of the " patriots," but supported by almost the whole of the Japanese press. Economic imperialism is to take the place of military imperialism ; but (and it is a large but) this is only possible for a poor country like Japan if she can get foreign financial support, and if China can be persuaded, or coerced, into accepting the Japanese protestations of " friendship " and respect for Chinese territorial integrity at their face value. There is, of course, no question at all of surrendering Manchuria to China ; the most ardent " liberal " in Japan would not dream of suggesting such a thing, and our Foreign Office would never be so ungentlemanly as to mention the subject. China must consider herself lucky to retain some political control over North China and bury the hatchet so far as Manchuria is concerned.

An article published in the December issue of the semi-official Japanese quarterly, *Contemporary Japan*, says that Britain wants to go hand-in-hand with Japan if only such co-operation does not run counter to our policy of maintaining collective security based on the League of Nations and co-operation with the U.S.A. The writer states that " August of this year (1936) saw the publication of a comprehensive plan reliably attributed to Sir Samuel Hoare." The details of this plan are of great interest to-day since they show what is likely to be the basis of the coming negotiations. The plan envisages political, economic, and military co-operation between Britain and Japan—with Japan recognising the territorial integrity of China, agreeing to accept the principle of the open door and promising that there will be no encroachments on British rights and interests in China. In return Britain would recognise Manchukuo and also Japan's vested rights and interests in North China. There would also be a reopening of Anglo-Japanese trade negotiations and a lowering of tariff walls to allow Japanese goods to enter the markets of the British Empire. Japan in return would give her adherence to the 1936 Naval Treaty between Britain, the U.S.A. and France. If Japan feels that even this is too much for her to concede, Sir Samuel would be satisfied with an agreement covering the naval problem in the Far East entered into between Japan and the U.S.S.R.

The writer thinks that the fact that such a plan has been put forward at all by a responsible Minister shows that there are no insuperable obstacles in the way of an Anglo-Japanese agreement. He also considers that it rules out the suggestion that an agreement with Japan is considered in Britain as incompatible with the essential co-operation with the U.S.A. Japan would be more or less satisfied with the Hoare offer if Britain would, in addition, " admit Japan's position as the leader of East Asia " and limit the principles of the open door and territorial integrity of China to compatibility with Japan's " Eastern Asia Monroe Doctrine." In return Japan would be magnanimous enough to respect the interests which Britain " has acquired " in China and acknowledge her future " legitimate activities " there.

There has been no denial in the British press or Parliament of the fact that such suggestions have been put forward by the First Lord. Moreover, Japan's refusal to limit her naval guns to 14-inch supports the view that she is bargaining with Britain on the lines of the Hoare proposals. Japan always bluffs, and although she may have no intention of installing 16-inch guns, she must be in a position to appear to be conceding something to Britain, if she is to get as much out of the latter as she hopes. It is even possible that the German-Japanese pact is mainly a bargaining counter in the eyes of Japan's " moderate " statesmen. The alleged Hoare proposals would give Britain nothing except a guarantee—for what it is worth, considering Japan's treatment of the Nine-Power Treaty—of her remaining interests in China. An agreement on these lines would in effect mean the end of British and American trade and investment in North China as well as Manchuria.

British Conservatives have always favoured the idea of Japan playing the gendarme for them in the Far East whilst they

concentrate on the defence of their European and African interests; they are blind to the fact that Japan is no longer the obedient junior partner but a menace. True, so long as the Japanese "extremists" appeared to be in control of Japanese policy and the "young officers" and some of the generals loudly proclaimed it as their aim to free all Asia from the yoke of White Imperialism, Britain was inclined to hold back and leave Japan isolated. But now that the gentlemanly bureaucrats of the old Meiji aristocratic type are apparently regaining control of the Japanese ship of state, Britain will probably be ready to treat all the claims to dominate Asia and "set India free" as the ravings of irresponsible extremists unworthy of serious attention, and to trust to the good faith and friendship of her "gallant little ally" of the past.

The Japanese for their part are seriously alarmed at the changed aspect of the Far Eastern situation, at the rumours and signs of closer collaboration between Britain and the U.S.A., at British rearmament, and at the growing difficulties of their own national economy resulting from the sharp rise in world prices of raw materials which deprives them of part of the advantage derived from low labour costs. The Japanese press sees in the Sianfu incident proof that the Nanking Government has "firmly consolidated its foundation" and fears that with domestic solidity China will be able to resist aggression. Therefore, it demands that Japan should "reshape her China policy." The assistance given by Britain to China's currency reform, the extension of the British Exports Credit scheme to China, and the rumours of British financial support to be given to Nanking, have all seriously alarmed Japan.

A Fascist member of the Diet said on February 20th that "Britain is responsible for China's unexpected resistance." General Hayashi, in replying, said "he had no faith in a pugnacious foreign policy." The result of Japan's bullying of China has been, in the words of the present Finance Minister, Mr. Yuki, "China's emphasis on her closer dependence on Europe and America." Recent events in China have shown that if Nanking is pressed too far there is a danger of the "remarriage" of the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communists, now that the Communists are ready to give up so much for the sake of national unity against Japan. Japan's more far-sighted leaders see that if they press the Chinese Nationalist Government too hard it may topple over backwards into the arms of Soviet China, and such an outcome would inevitably lead to an alliance between China and the U.S.S.R., and put an end to the possibility of Japan's eventually acquiring the hegemony of all China.

Chiang Kaishek is between devil and deep sea, since he cannot resist Japan unless he comes to terms with the Chinese Soviets in his rear, and he cannot allow Japan to take possession of North China without arousing such a storm on the Left as to risk being swept out of office by the fury of his own people. The Japanese now hope that if the devil comes flourishing a demand for economic concessions, instead of a sword, he may appear less terrible to the Generalissimo than the deep sea of Communism. There is little doubt that Nanking would prefer to make very large economic concessions in North China than risk a "remarriage" with the Chinese Communists, if she could do so without loss of face. This Japan now wants to make possible by repudiating all intention of seizing more Chinese territory.

As regards the attitude of the U.S.A., which Japan recognises as a vital factor in the determination of British policy, it is possible that the present administration's regard for the Democratic South may prevent Mr. Roosevelt from offering any opposition to the Japanese proposals. Japan is now America's largest cotton market, and the fact that one of the main reasons for which she wants North China is to develop cotton growing there and so free herself from dependence on American cotton may be ignored in Washington. Present gains are likely to count for more than future losses. Nevertheless the U.S.A. is the only influence which may save the Chinese people from the betrayal which is now being prepared against them.

FREDA UTLEY

ON LOSING ELECTIONS

THE results of recent by-elections have already produced a crop of theses for and against the Unity campaign, the Popular Front, etc. I wish not to add to their number, but simply to jot down some ideas about Labour's chances of winning power which occurred to me while fighting West Birmingham.

Apart from 5,000 business voters, West Birmingham is a purely working-class constituency divided into two wards: (1) respectable All Saints, where there are three bathrooms to 16,000 people, and (2) the slum of St. Paul's, where there are none. Thus (discounting 4,000 removals since the 1935 Register) there are roughly 30,000 working-class electors, of whom in this election some 9,000 voted Tory, 9,500 Labour, while 11,500 did not trouble to vote at all.

That this should be the result of a three weeks' intensive campaign with the full backing not only of the Birmingham Labour Movement but also of enthusiasts from all over the Midlands may seem disappointing, and it certainly indicates that there is no swing towards Labour in this part of the country. But it would be wrong to conclude at once that Labour's programme is at fault or that any other result would have been achieved by a Popular Front. Too many people are blinded by their interest in policy to certain other factors which are certainly no less important and which, I believe, still play a decisive role not only in Birmingham but also in many other parts of the country.

To begin with, Labour organisation when we arrived in West Birmingham was almost non-existent. Four or five heroic individuals were just contriving to keep the Movement alive in All Saints, but in the slum it hardly existed. Of the six Councillors all were Unionist. On the other hand, the Tory machine, well greased with money from local magnates and equipped with an elaborate system of street captains, was extremely efficient.

This state of affairs could be paralleled in scores of constituencies. In the rest of Birmingham, for instance, not more than three divisions can be said to possess an adequately organised Labour Party. Is it surprising that against twelve full-time Tory agents the Movement cannot make a strong showing? We may discuss policy till we are blue in the face, but policy cannot win elections without a strong and disciplined party to push it; and even if it does win on a sudden whim of public opinion, it cannot hold the positions it has gained unless it has a solid support of paying members and willing propagandists.

Let me put the matter quite bluntly. The decisive factors in an election are, in my opinion, four in number. I will list them in order of importance.

1. *The economic and social conditions by which "public opinion" is moulded.* At the moment these are largely out of the control of the Labour Party which, however, as the Opposition, benefits immediately by such adverse factors as rising food prices, etc.

2. *Party organisation.* Given that conditions tend to rouse discontent with the Government, it is organisation more than any other factor which canalises that discontent into the Opposition party. Without it the best intentions in the world cannot materialise in victory at the polls.

3. *The personality of the Opposition leaders and of the candidate.* These, without organisation, can have little effect: given organisation they are the next most decisive factor. The discontented elector in thinking of an alternative to the National Government, naturally casts round for men and women able to replace it; and, if he dislikes the Tory candidate, he may even have a look at the Labour man. But how these personalities are presented to him, depends not on their own capacities but on the skill of the agent, the canvasser and the press—in fact on the Party Machine.

4. The last factor on my list is *Policy*. However much *we* may realise its profound importance, I do not believe that its finer points have any relevance to electioneering. Labour to the ordinary voter means the Labour leaders who believe

in Socialism and the League of Nations and in the betterment of the workers' lot by Trade Union activity and by Act of Parliament: National means the National Government, which believes in "prosperity" and rearmament. He makes his choice between these two alternatives, and the only points which sway him, apart from the broad considerations, are concrete particular issues such as food prices, excess profits, annual holidays with pay, the promise of a house, or, most probable of all, the fear that his children may have to stay at school till they are 16. He is in fact affected by an amalgam of the vague party myth and concrete particular promises which immediately touch his own life; and these can only be presented to him successfully by a party which recognises the distinction between policy-making and winning power. In an election the policy and the candidate are material to be used: they should not control, but should themselves be manipulated by the expert whose job it is to win the election.

I suppose all candidates are natural "policy-makers," and I am no exception. But should not we and the thousands of rational Socialist planners who throng the Labour Party once and for all realise that you have got to win power before you can carry out a policy, and that no electorate has ever voted simply and solely for a policy, however perfect? If that is the case, then certainly one problem (I believe *the* problem) must be solved: how can we, not only in Birmingham but elsewhere, build a party machine willing to stop discussing policy for a year or two and get down to the job of converting some of the Tory workers into supporters of the Labour Party.

The objection will be made that it is no use working for a party whose leadership is under suspicion and whose policy is open to criticism with regard to Spain and rearmament. What, someone will ask, are you reorganising for? And how can I co-operate with people who reject Unity?

This type of argument often covers a disastrous self-deception. The Socialist who is too good for the Labour Party is too good for any practical political work at all. He derides the ineffectiveness of the Party, and in the same breath decides to give up politics and retire into an ineffective hobby of policy-making. For let us be honest: at the moment the Labour Party is the only instrument capable of being made into an effective alternative to the National Government. It is weak and badly organised in many parts of the country precisely because those who should be strengthening it are merely discussing it. Instead of realising that it is not only the faults of Labour policy but also the sheer facts of "prosperity" which are maintaining the National Government in power, they dilate on the need for Communist affiliation and a strong policy with regard to Spain, as though these items were of the slightest interest to any save the minority of politically conscious electors. Such critics frame their propaganda to satisfy their own tastes and neglect the simple fact that it is not they but the Tory voter who must be converted. Their busy activity is self-intoxicating, but millions of people still read the racing page, because, on the whole, conditions are not bad enough to drive them to politics, and they have not seen a Labour canvasser for five years, far less seen any signs of practical activity by the local Labour Party.

In such a situation there is only one thing to be done—to prepare and consolidate an electoral machine strong enough to take advantage of the swing in public opinion when it occurs. The Party needs not only a better lead from Transport House, but well-organised divisional Labour parties willing to work on the doorstep, to build up membership, to increase representation in local politics, and, above all, *to study the day-to-day needs and discontents of the non-political voter*. If this can be done now when the country is beginning to tire of the National Government there is some chance that we may win an election and have a chance of fulfilling our plans.

To sum up: 1931 broke down our electoral machine in many parts of the country. The consciousness of this weakness has caused a flood of self-criticism by people unwilling to get down to the routine job of rebuilding the machine. They talk because they rightly think they cannot win; but they are not willing to do the work which makes winning possible, and so their politics become farther and farther removed from the real mind of the electorate. On the other hand, there is plenty of enthusiasm among the rank and file, as I know from my own experience in Birmingham. They are delighted to stop talking and get down to work, if they are given a chance: but their energy in an election is largely wasted if the spade-work of routine organisation has not been done.

The constituency parties are clamouring for more representation at the Party Conference, more part in the discussion of policy. Their claims are strong, but they would be stronger still if more of them showed an interest in the dull work of organising their own divisions for victory equal to that which they display in arguing policy. I wonder how many of the constituency parties which are most vocal in their criticism of the inactivity of Transport House have an individual membership of over 2,000.

R. H. CROSSMAN

CHEERS

I HAPPENED to have the wireless turned on the other night when Copenhagen was celebrating the Jubilee of the King of Denmark, and, even after the Coronation festivities of London, it was pleasant to hear the full-throated cheers of the Danish students as they stood under their torches and gave their nine shouts of welcome. I have always liked the sound of human beings cheering. I like to hear cheers even on the wireless. There are some people who turn off the wireless at the end of an opera when the audience breaks out into rapturous applause: for me this unintellectual uproar is one of the best parts of the performance; and, when a thousand throats come to the aid of two thousand hands in acclamation of the singers, I would ask for no better choral music. It is pleasant even to listen-in to a football match in a foreign capital, though one does not understand a single word of the broadcast, merely for the sake of the noises of the crowd. It is difficult to say when human beings are happiest, but I am sure that one of the occasions is when they are cheering and listening to other people's cheers.

Imagine for a moment a world from which the custom of cheering had vanished. The meaning of "cheerless," according to the dictionary, is "joyless, sad, gloomy"; and, if ever the world becomes cheerless, it will be a joyless, sad and gloomy place indeed. One of the worst faults of the cinema is that it does not incite the audience to cheer as the theatre does. If the cinema ever kills the theatre, it may be that audiences will gradually lose the capacity for cheering and will sink into a listlessness that can scarcely summon up energy for a lukewarm handclap. I shall never believe in the film-play as a great artistic form till I hear the audiences roaring like Danish students at the end of the performance. The cinema audiences, I am sure, would love to cheer if someone set them the example. They show that they have the root of the matter in them when they assemble at railway stations to demonstrate like maniacs at the arrival of some film-star from Hollywood. If only this ecstasy of misbehaviour would be diverted into the cinema itself! But, for some strange reason, the audience in a cinema is never more than a stray collection of individuals: it never becomes an organic whole, like the crowd at a symphony concert or a public meeting. Each of the spectators is spiritually as aloof from the mass of his neighbours as if he were in an art gallery. It may be urged that the silence in an art gallery is evidence that great art can be enjoyed without any need for cheering. I would suggest, on the contrary, that one of the reasons for the unpopularity of the art of painting in comparison with music and the stage is the silence that broods over the art gallery and awes and incapacitates the imagination of the ordinary man. The ordinary man becomes doubly certain of what he likes when everybody else is applauding it. He is timid of committing himself to an opinion on a work of art in an atmosphere in which you could hear a pin

drop. This explains the depressed air of many visitors to art galleries in contrast to the cheerful look of opera-goers. At the opera you see man as a social animal; in the art gallery you see him as a lost soul.

The Americans, I fancy, were the first race in the modern world to realise the important part played by cheering in the social life of man. They saw that men loved to shout, and thereupon trained them to shout as human beings had never shouted before. Haters of mechanisation dislike the college yells with which American students cheer their sporting heroes to victory, and argue that noisy enthusiasm should be spontaneous. Provided it is noisy enough, it does not seem to me to matter greatly. And, apart from this, I take it that the ululation of a college yell can give as great an effect of spontaneity as the singing of a national anthem by a crowd. From all one hears of these college yells they make old men feel fifty years younger and young men feel as if they were back in the nursery smashing things. Cheering is the perfect rejuvenator. Call no man old till he has ceased to be able to cheer.

There is certainly no less enviable figure than the man who is unable to applaud. Self-control is a beautiful thing, but it can look curiously like indifference. I should hate to see a football crowd at Highbury watching the game with the impassive countenances of Red Indians. If this kind of thing became the rule, I imagine, it would be the end of football. You cannot have great football without cheering. Pedants say that football should be a game for the players without reference to the spectators, but it is the cheers of the spectators that have often decided the result of the match. The popularity of Association football in comparison with Rugby is partly due to the fact that Association enthusiasts are much greater cheerers than the followers of Rugby, so that each of them feels almost as if he were taking part in the game with his throat. At the last Association match that I saw, the spectators cheered continuously. Every time the ball was kicked, they cheered like men. What they were cheering about half the time I did not know, and I do not think they knew; but they cheered. And I am sure every one of them went home feeling as fit as if he had been treated by an osteopath. What poisons they had shaken from their systems with their shouts! What enlivening exercise they had given to the muscles of their lungs and hearts! How their brains, stagnant an hour before, had awakened to happy life!

After mixing in their very refreshing company, I could not resist the conclusion that one of the things for which human beings long most ardently is something or somebody to cheer. Think of the discomforts to which they will put themselves if they foresee that in the end there will be an opportunity of cheering. In order to be able to cheer a royal procession they will endure fatigue that would seem cruel to a galley-slave. Utterly indifferent to boat-racing, they will assemble on the banks of the Thames in their hundreds of thousands merely to cheer for about a minute an institution of learning in which they take not the slightest interest. So great is the love of cheering that a crowd will even cheer a runaway dog along a processional route. There are cricket matches at which every member of the winning side has to appear at a pavilion window at the close in order to give the spectators an opportunity to indulge in their passion for cheering. I do not know what is the record number of calls taken by a great actor or actress at the end of a performance, but I know that the more often the actor or actress comes forward to be cheered, the more elated become all but the cynics among the audience. Even the report of a speech in a newspaper becomes immensely more enjoyable if at the end of sentence after sentence "Cheers" or "Loud cheers" is interpolated, and when the report ends with "Loud and prolonged applause, during which the speaker sat down," who can help wishing that he had been there?

It may be that, from the point of view of the rationalist, there is an element of danger in this passion for cheering. The cheer-loving mob is certainly not a reasonable creature, and it is on its cheers that all the great misleaders, as well as all the great leaders, of mankind have thriven. Dictators live on cheers as actors and demagogues do. Forbid cheering in Europe and I doubt whether any dictatorship could survive. Many of the people who are cheering dictators to-day would undoubtedly have been cheering their opponents equally enthusiastically if things had turned out differently. Browning wrote a poem on the lack of principle in the cheers of the multitude, and, though the cheers do good to the multitude, they can be very misleading to the idol of the hour. The public is just as likely to cheer his overthrow as his triumph. The simple truth is that it must exercise its lungs.

It seems to me useless to condemn the public for its lack of consistency in idolatry. After all, we have that good man Emerson's word for it that consistency may be a dangerous vice, and most of us can look back along a pathway strewn with idols once worshipped and then depedestalled to the accompaniment of our applause. The fact that a man in his youth has shouted with joy over Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* ought not to condemn him to lifelong loyalty to a belief in Swinburne's supreme greatness. In his early exultation he missed seeing his idol's feet: to have seen them would have seemed treachery; now that he is no longer capable of this happy blindness, what can he do but confess his change of allegiance?

I do not wish to suggest that Swinburne, Meredith, Kipling and the other literary idols of the late nineteenth century were less than men of genius. I am referring merely to the disappearance of the ecstasy among those who once applauded them most vociferously. Each generation cheers new gods, and the next generation displaces them and sets other gods on the pedestals. This does not mean that it was a mistake in the first instance to cheer. To cheer in youth is good for the soul, even if it is sometimes bad for the judgment. To combine judgment with the capacity for cheering is, I suppose, one of the high peaks of human happiness.

If it is natural, however, to divert our cheers from one author to another with the passage of time, why should we regard it as contemptible to be equally changeable in our attitude to public men? I have changed so many of my own opinions in the course of my life that I have some qualms about denouncing the fickleness of the multitude. In any case the multitude cannot help itself. It cannot help changing, and it cannot help cheering. And when there is no bloodlust in the cheering I confess I like the noise. Y. Y.

Correspondence

THE CORONATION: AN AMERICAN IMPRESSION

SIR,—I have visited England many times, but I remain more alien here than in lands whose language I do not understand. (As a matter of fact, I understand only the *written* language of England. The spoken tongue eludes me.)

Though of partly English descent, three generations on another continent have shut me out from the workings of the English mind. I came to the Coronation fresh from months in the interior of Mexico, and I find myself as baffled by the magic of monarchy as I was by the Aztec dances of Tepotzlan. Indeed, the English reverence for the crown is more bewildering than the Indian's reverence for his gods of stone, because it is less expected.

An American, you must understand, starts with the handicap of having no experience of what in England is called a "gentleman." In the United States a gentleman is merely a person who does not eat peas with a knife. It is true, of course, that we have our Groton and our Hill, our Harvard and our Yale, corresponding roughly to Oxford and Cambridge and the public schools of England. It is true that we have an aristocracy *de facto* if not *de jure*; and it is true that the equality of which we talk so much is to a considerable extent a pleasant fiction. But while in practice one man may not be as good as another, in theory he is. In our principles we are Jeffersonian, if in habit we follow Hamilton.

The man of money, and, to a lesser degree, of lineage, is respected in the United States, but it is a furtive respect. One may defer to power, but it is our tradition that the servant of to-day may be the master of tomorrow—that, indeed, he is under a moral obligation to rise. If a son does not top his father he is considered somehow lacking in energy and ambition. According to our social rule book it is a sin to keep one's place.

I cite all this to show how difficult it is for an American to grasp the Coronation. For myself, I must confess that I had thought the crown to be merely one of those pleasant anachronisms with which man solaces himself for the pains of progress. I had thought it a quaintly charming bit of medievalism, preserved in lavender as a memento of days presumably more glamorous. I was not prepared for its vital reality. I looked for the theatrical and found a sacrament.

To my astonishment, I find the British monarchy to be a form of religious faith. One believes, or one does not. There is no "explaining" it, any more than one can "explain" transubstantiation or the fragrance of a rose. There it is, totem, voodoo or truth, *saeculâ saeculorum*, depending on your point of view.

I was up at dawn the day of the Coronation, mingling with the crowd. Some were in toppers and spats, some in thin shabbiness, looking as if a square meal was what they needed most. All were cheerful and resigned to their ten hours' wait. They read their newspapers or stood in line at the tea dispensaries, or chatted in low tones. There was no noise, no shouting, no horse-play.

When it came time for the procession to leave Buckingham Palace, I thought the radio would soften the ennui by describing what was going on. But it merely continued to alternate fitfully between hymns, old English ballads, American jazz and a rhapsody to the Empire, which it played twice.

Still nobody complained. When, at last, the procession hove in sight, the rain came with it. Umbrellas went up. But when someone called "Down umbrellas!" the umbrellas promptly went down. It was amazing!

According to some commentators, the applause was "wild." I would not call it that. On the contrary, it was limited to hand-clapping, the waving of handkerchiefs and huzzahs, which I am sure left nobody hoarse. But if the applause was not boisterous, it was most certainly spontaneous. There was not a sour note in the whole of it, so far as I could tell. This, of course, might be explained by the presence of so many soldiers and policemen. My impression, however, is that there was no jeering for the simple reason that there was nobody who felt like jeering.

It corroborated the impression I have had everywhere in England—that nowhere on the globe to-day is there a nation so completely unified. Everywhere else there is Left and Right, with a chasm between them. Everywhere else the bitterness between the haves and the have nots is great. Everywhere else there is a ferment of conviction that the world must be radically altered. Here in England the conviction seems all but universal that while whatever is may not be wholly right, a few minor changes will fix it.

I sat saucer-eyed as I listened to the ritual of the Coronation. It came over me suddenly and with something of a shock that Britain was not a democracy in the sense of a government of, by, and for the people. It was something quite different—a theocracy in partnership with a military oligarchy. King George was cast for the leading role, but His Grace of Canterbury had all the lines. In the Abbey the priest was top man. On the street the men-at-arms took over. The people sat or stood by the wayside and approved.

A Communist friend of mine says that the next focus of revolution will be the United States; and certain it is that there are ominous creakings and rumblings in the social structure of the American republic. Wealth and privilege are definitely on the defensive, with the common man demanding not so much a share in the loot as a place in the driver's seat. This, I suspect, will mean new political alignments.

Whether the struggle will result in some form of Fascism, or in a tyranny of the masses, or in an extension of economic democracy, I do not know. All I know is that to one coming from revolutionary Mexico by way of the turbulent United States, the unity and decorum of the British is overpowering. If I were an "agitator" I think I should waste no time planting seed in English soil. And if I were a cardboard Caesar, I think I should rattle my sabre a trifle less. England, with her Oxford oath, her Hyde Park rabble-rousers, her pacifist philosophers, her dawdling in the Mediterranean and the antics of her madcap Prince, has given the world a wholly false impression.

As I sloshed through the rain after the Coronation, my ears cocked to catch what I could of the talk in the streets, it came over me that the lords of Britain have what the lords of no other land have—a people who will obey orders, and obey them because they *want* to obey them. There is talk everywhere about the "United Front." England is the only place I have seen it.

HOWARD VINCENT O'BRIEN

[Mr. O'Brien is a distinguished American journalist, well known for his outspoken column in the *Chicago Daily News*.—ED., *N.S. & N.*].

MR. JOAD AND THE P.P.U.

SIR,—In his otherwise admirable and balanced résumé of what is doing on the various peace fronts, Mr. Joad would appear to have turned one of these fronts rather upside down. After summarising very fairly the pacifist contention that "whatever the aims for which war is fought, to establish Socialism, to defend Democracy, or to crush Fascism, the effect will be the same, namely, the establishment of Fascism as an alternative to anarchy. Nothing, then, is to be gained by fighting"—he goes on, "Something, however, may be saved by a refusal to fight, even if it is only peace of mind. Hence the appeal of such a movement as the Peace Pledge Union. . . . It is, of course, admitted that as a method of preventing war pure pacifism is at present negligible. . . . The movement is thus religious rather than political in its nature, and aims at the preservation of individual integrity in the face of war rather than at the prevention of war. Its effect is to withdraw a substantial number of young men and women from active participation in politics and to concentrate their attention upon the discipline of self-improvement."

Mr. Joad, with every intention of fairness to a movement for which he has, obviously, much sympathy, has here, if I may say so, got the Peace Pledge Union pretty wrong. Its aim is to prevent war; its belief, that if a large number of people in all countries refused to abet or contemplate these means of settling their differences, war would, in fact, be prevented. The fact that so far the number is necessarily too small for this purpose to be attained is irrelevant. As Mr. Joad himself very properly remarks, "It can never be right to abandon the advocacy of a long-run method of salvation merely because circumstances are unfavourable to its short-run application."

Pacifists aim at increasing, until they are strong enough to exercise effective political influence, the numbers of those men and women who reject without qualification or condition the primitive and custom-sanctioned system of settling differences between governments, or between sections of people, by attacking and injuring the individuals of the opposed party with savage weapons of assault, such as sharp pieces of steel to cut holes in them, flying missiles to pierce and kill them, bombs to blow them to bits and burn them, gas to poison, flay or choke them, or any other and worse instruments of torture and death that are still to be devised. This is the unconditional rejection of the pacifist, whether such torture and assault be perpetrated in the name of patriotism, democracy, liberty, socialism, religion, peace, or any other recipe for world improvement. This rejection is arrived at by a number of different roads—religion, humanity, civilisation, intelligence, revolt of the nerves, common sense, or even sense of humour. However they get there, pacifists have got to the point where, whatever technique they advocate for the settling of quarrels, this coarse, unintelligent and barbaric technique is as absolutely ruled out as furthering the cause of religion by burning heretics is ruled out. Ruling out is negative, Mr. Joad will say. But pacifists, far from "concentrating their attention on the discipline of self-improvement," concentrate it on trying to devise means of inducing the governments of the world to substitute civilised methods for uncivilised. (The League of Nations Union shares, of course, this aim; but it makes the vital reservation that what it admits to be the barbarian method is to be kept ready for use in emergency; it doesn't reject it wholesale, it merely wants Caliban chained under a new master.)

I do not think that the young men and women at the universities, among whom the Peace Pledge Union is, as Mr. Joad says, making considerable progress, show any quietist tendencies to withdraw from active life and concentrate on self-improvement. Nor, I think, is their pacifism mainly religious. And certainly it is positive and constructive. It would be interesting to know to what pacifists Mr. Joad had been talking when he wrote, "By admitting that pure pacifism is impracticable in the sense that the country will not conceivably adopt it, its sponsors declare it

not a policy but the negation of a policy." Its sponsors are not such pessimists as that. What they admit is that countries are unlikely to adopt it for some time. Again let me remind Mr. Joad of his "long-run method of salvation."

The pacifist answer about the Spanish revolt is too long to begin on here, even were I competent. It involves the whole technique, experimental as yet, of dealing with and resisting mass violence. Whether this technique would have worked successfully (on the short run) in this case or not, it would at least have been more intelligent and civilised and better worth trying than the brutal, tragically stupid, tragically barren and hateful competition in rival barbarities which Spain is staging now, and from which it is hard to imagine what good, what freedom, what humane living can come, whichever side succeeds in throwing the most bombs, smashing the most cities, and slaughtering the most Spaniards. *Malorum immensa vorago et gurges*—one cannot see across it.

But at least, whether we call pacifism right or wrong, do not let us call it a negation or a retreat, for it is neither.

ROSE MACAULAY

MR. POUND'S ERUDITION

SIR,—Mr. Raymond Mortimer, in his article on Mr. Ezra Pound's *Polite Essays*, appears to harbour some doubts as to the author's competence in foreign languages. If he looks into Mr. Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, he will find ample confirmation for his suspicions, so far as Latin is concerned. This work, as Mr. T. S. Eliot is careful to inform us in his Introduction to Mr. Pound's *Selected Poems*, is a paraphrase and not a translation, though he adds, somewhat disconcertingly, "that it is too much of a 'translation' to be intelligible to any but the accomplished student of Pound's Poetry." This exacting qualification I do not pretend to possess, but will merely say that the "paraphrase" frequently shows an ignorance of Latin that many schoolboys might well be ashamed of. Instances occur on almost every page, but I will only quite a few of the most glaring.

Mr. Pound translates "māla" (apples) by "sins" (măla), which makes nonsense and won't scan. He mistakes the verb "canes" (you will sing) for a noun and translates "dogs"! "Cimbrorumque minas et benefacta Mari": "the threats of the Cimbri and the services of Marius to his country." Mere scholars consider this to refer to the invasion of Italy by the Cimbri and their defeat by the great Caius Marius at Vercellae, which saved Rome from probable downfall, but Mr. Pound is not of their opinion and prefers "*Welsh mines* and the profits Marus (sic.) had out of them"! Lastly, the well-known lines:

> Cedite, Romani scriptores, cedite Grai!
> Nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade,

written when Virgil was known to be working at the Aeneid, though it was not yet published. For the last line which means: "Something greater than the Iliad is in birth," Mr. Pound has "a much *larger* Iliad is in the course of construction." Here it is only necessary to remark (1) that the Aeneid is much shorter than the Iliad, (2) that Propertius is obviously thinking of quality, not quantity.

I will only add that if anyone who knows his Propertius wants a quiet evening's amusement, he need only procure a copy of Mr. Pound's *Homage* and compare it with the original.

33 Selborne Road, Hove. ARNOLD C. TAYLOR

OSTEOPATHY

SIR,—Mr. Streeter says that the only purpose of the Osteopaths' Bill is to establish a register to enable the public to distinguish the qualified Osteopath. I say that the Bill demands a "trans-atlantic monopoly," protected by heavy fines, of the practice of Osteopathy, which is defined as what is done by Osteopaths. Anyone can see which of us is right by buying a copy at H.M. Stationery Office for fourpence.

DENIS BROWNE

[This correspondence has gone on long enough.—ED. *N.S. & N.*].

THE HUMAN NEEDS OF LABOUR

SIR,—If I venture to intervene in the dispute over Mr. Rowntree's *Human Needs of Labour*, it is not because I have any knowledge of dietary, but merely to question a statistical assumption common to Mr. Rowntree and his critics. No doubt it was correct to allow for three children when the original edition of the book appeared, but would it not be more accurate to-day to regard the average family as having roughly two children, and to recalculate its requirements accordingly? P. R. SMYTHE

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ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE

SIR,—General Crozier states that the modern "anti-aircraft gun is no better than it was in 1918 (when it was of very little use)."

I wonder how many civilians realise quite how little use that was. I can supply some experience. In three hundred hours' flying "on the line" on the Western Front, in slow, low-flying machines—that is to say, in machines that afforded the natural, ideal and continuous target for anti-aircraft fire—in all that time not only was the machine never hit, but, much of a coward as I am, the shooting was never accurate enough to make me feel that the machine was *going* to be hit.

In a squadron of which I had two years' experience (eighteen machines doing the same low-flying work daily) no machine was ever brought down by anti-aircraft fire. Once, in all the time that I was in France, I saw a German machine brought down by A.A. fire in daylight (and then the saying went round that "Archie must have made a mistake. He'd hit something"), and once by night, when a German bombing machine, having by mistake left its navigation lights on, and flying a straight course, presented a sitting target. This represents the proportion of casualties over a time when, all in all, I must have seen several thousands of flights carried out day by day, in the slow machines of those days, in conditions favourable to anti-aircraft fire.

Admitted now that guns have improved out of recognition, so have machines. We could crack on, at a pinch, about 70 m.p.h. A modern war machine not only "will," but does, do upwards of 200, with a capacity for height undreamt of by us. Modern anti-aircraft fire might be calculated to incommode, or even break up, a slow, low-flying formation of machines. To imagine that it could actually repel or inflict more than an infinitesimal percentage of casualties on a fast, high-flying fleet, is laughable.

To say this—again to quote General Crozier—is "not to be disloyal nor a pacifist, but merely to state the truth."

Fitzroy Square, W.1. HUBERT GRIFFITH
(ex-Flying Officer, R.A.F.)

THE BUS STRIKE

SIR,—Some time last summer the Mexican Union of Electricians went on strike. In doing so they paralysed a considerable part of the activities of the Republic and caused a good deal of inconvenience to the public. The situation was favourable, therefore, for the employers to mobilise public indignation against the strikers, as indeed they had already begun to do before the strikers took counter-measures by assuming the offensive against various forms of exploitation of the public needs. One example will suffice, I think, to show how this was done.

The milk trade was in the hands of a Trust, which abused its monopoly by charging excessive prices for milk. When the Directors of this Trust came to the strikers with what amounted to a threat, demanding electricity "in the interests of the public," they got the shock of their lives: they were told that they would get their electricity, but only on condition . . . that they reduced the price of milk to a figure which the strikers estimated would be equitable, and that they made a public declaration in the press that this reduction had been made at the instance of the electricians and that it still enabled them to run their business at a profit.

Action of this nature served to bring home to the public a fact which they had not previously realised, that their interests were engaged on the side of the strikers, rather than on that of the employers, with the result that the electricians were enabled to force from their employers conditions which are, I think, in advance of anything hitherto obtained by any workers in this country.

Would it not be wise for the busmen to profit by this experience? It has been estimated that if the Government were to raise money at 3 per cent. and buy out the L.P.T.B., there would be an annual saving in debt and interest charges of about £2,000,000. It has been estimated also that it would cost about £650,000 to satisfy the busmen's now reduced demands. If the busmen were to insist that the saving of £2,000,000 should be made as indicated above, and that the surplus which remained after the satisfaction of their own demands should be distributed to the general public

in the shape of reductions of fares, it is at least possible that the tide of public opinion, already inclined to flow in their favour, would become so decisively strong that they could obtain the greater improvements in their conditions which they originally claimed.

EDGAR P. YOUNG,
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INFLATION AND WAGES

SIR,—It is quite obvious that by the time the Chancellor has made all his concessions to angry industrialists and speculators the National Defence Contribution tax will have become a subsidy to industry, and this particular method of checking a profit inflation will have proved abortive. It is also obvious that the Treasury has got itself so tied up with its cheap money policy that the weapon of the discount rate is ruled out for this purpose. The Chancellor himself is reduced to proclaiming in season and out that his armament programme is a godsend to the depressed areas. Since we are all aware that, if a progressive Government were spending half the amount on roads, houses and schools, the Chancellor would be prophesying ruin, damnation and destruction, we know what quality of leadership to expect in the near future.

The result is that the responsibility of regulating the economic system has for the first time passed, by default, to the working classes. It has become the social duty of the workers to encroach upon profits by raising costs through the medium of higher wages. I am aware that after catching the early tram and putting in a day's labour the wage earner just wants to take off his boots and not worry about rearranging his schedule of consumption. I am also aware that the so-called higher forms of consumption as determined by our man-milliners do not appeal to persons of simple taste. It is also probable that a large section of the proletariat derives considerable amusement from the current antics of the Stock Exchange and would hate to spoil the fun. Nevertheless the workers have aroused great hopes by their recent display of patriotism and it would be cruel to disappoint these hopes at this juncture. A 15 per cent. increase all round and a pledge to sit on the tail of the cost-of-living index would iron the furrows out of the brow of the Bank of England and give the Treasury the first good night's sleep it has had for months.

London, N.2. G. L. SCHWARTZ

Miscellany

MUSIC—DRAMA

THE music dramas of Wagner under Dr. Wilhelm Furtwängler have been receiving performances at Covent Garden which must have delighted every Wagnerite. Few composers are as fortunate to-day in their interpreters as Richard Wagner, and the cast of singers in the "Ring" production this season makes up a body of artists who are not only excellent in themselves but who also, by dint of vast experience of singing in this one work combine to make a truly remarkable ensemble. Nor is there, in my experience, a living conductor who is capable of getting as much out of this music as Furtwängler. The performances of *Aïda* and *Turandot* have not been on an equal level, in spite of the strenuousness of Mr. Barbirolli in the latter, the expert experience of Signor Salfi in the former and a good cast in each case. Both these are remarkable operas. *Aïda* has moments of great beauty, a third act of exquisite lyrical invention, and an astonishing and sustained vitality throughout; *Turandot* shows that Puccini's exceptional gifts both as a musician and as an opera composer were still developing before he died. Both these operas are masterpieces of stage-craft, of musical invention and of dramatic power, although Puccini never had at his command the purity of melodic line which Verdi occasionally possessed; in his lyricism there is always a note of sentimentality. But both these composers were absolute masters of theatrical effect, of the art of contriving tense dramatic situations and of clothing them in appropriately expressive and enhancing music. In this respect they are more truly dramatic than Wagner, in whose dramatic scenes and music there is astonishingly little variety. In fact we might say that every Wagner music drama consists of one, and only one, dramatic situation whose tension is tightened and relaxed alternately through the required number of scenes and during a space of time long enough to enable Wagner to get down on paper for his vocalists all the words he wishes them to say—which are never few, seeing that he wrote his own librettos and was one of the most prolix writers who have ever lived.

Nevertheless, it would be true to say that not a single work by any of these composers is a music drama in the way that Gluck's *Alceste* is. *Tristan und Isolde* and *Otello* may be described as tragedies, but not in the sense in which *Alceste* is a tragedy, and I hope the production of *Alceste* (unfortunately only for a single performance!) this season has revealed to some at least of its hearers the uniqueness of Gluck's position in this respect. Personally I would say that *Alceste* was by far the most interesting of the works given at Covent Garden so far this season, and also the most impressive, although it was far from being as near the ideal as a production as the Verdi and Wagner performances have been.

What distinguishes Gluck's tragedy from the others may be stated thus: the cases of *Otello* and of *Tristan und Isolde* are highly individual, by which I mean that the plot would only "work" given the particular characters of the protagonists in both cases. The Aristotelean action in *Otello* would not have produced its tragic denouement if Otello had had the nature, for example, of Hamlet. The case of Tristan and Isolde is rather different, but again distinctly individual. The mutual passion which actuated these two can hardly be described as love—at least not in the sense in which the greatest poets and thinkers have conceived love. It is, for example, not the love Shakespeare referred to in his most famous of sonnets; nor is it the love Dante had for Beatrice. Indeed, it is not at all love in its profoundest and most universal form, but rather a peculiar and destructive (admitted by Wagner himself!) obsession which does not increase but diminishes the vital power of the lovers until it destroys them both. That death is the end of love is Wagner's own creed. This is, in itself, sufficient to indicate that Wagner's "tragedy" is only a specific case of melodrama.

Gluck's *Alceste* is altogether different. The protagonist lovers, Alceste and Admète, do not appear in the drama as in any way peculiar or unusual. No idiosyncrasy of either protagonist contributes in the slightest degree to the tragic events which take place. They are universally human, and they do not express a single feeling which would be outside the nature of any normal ordinary human being. Therefore they are highly symbolic figures, and their tragedy is of universal import. Here let me say that I disregard altogether as unimportant the alterations made by Gluck and his librettist, Calzabigi, in Euripides' Greek original. The stuff written by commentators who seek to describe the tragedy of Euripides as a "cult" drama glorifying hospitality because in it the guest Hercules plays such a role in the restoration of Alceste and so find in Gluck's substitution of Apollo for Hercules an eighteenth-century dramatic improvement I dismiss as typical "historical" balderdash. Actually in his Paris version Gluck restored Hercules, but Hercules and Apollo are equally *dei ex machina* and either does equally well. What is important and eternal is the situation of Admète, doomed to die unless he can find a substitute, and the sacrifice of Alceste, his wife, who alone is ready to take his place. The feelings of Admète and of Alceste in this situation are universally human, and are marvellously portrayed by Gluck, who has known how to invest the whole tragedy with a grandeur and sublimity that are simply not to be overpraised. Critics still constantly write and talk of Gluck's musical limitations. To me there is more creative musical imagination in every scene of *Alceste* than in the whole of the "Ring," and neither Verdi nor any other operatic composer—not even Mozart—has surpassed some of the strokes of inventive musical genius which Gluck conceived in this glorious work.

Nevertheless, it may be admitted that *Alceste* is too sublime for general favour. As a great French musician once wrote:

> What you tell me of the revival of *Alceste* at Weimar does not surprise me. What astonishes me is that one lets the bourgeois into the theatre when such works are presented. If I were the Grand Duke I would send on such an evening to each of these good folk a ham and two bottles of beer, requesting them to remain at home . . .

And so to-day, very correctly, Sir Thomas Beecham has given us only one chance of hearing *Alceste*, which, I hope, was taken by many readers of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

W. J. TURNER

"THANKS FOR MERCIES PAST RECEIVED . . ."

LANGUIDLY the dust revolved in the sunlight, which fell in thick parallel stripes across 5 A form room; quite without purpose, the specks spun slowly upwards, just moving, exhausted dancers in a non-stop marathon. Drowsily blue-bottles made spasmodic love on the window pane; and drowsily the class waited for the hour to finish, idly turning pages, "revising their notes," killing time, but doing it quietly: the "Little Man" was in one of his dangerous moods—already he had threatened to keep in the next person who spoke—on edge with end-of-term irritability, when the least thing might precipitate an explosion.

Impatiently the master slashed at the sheets in front of him with his red pencil, making havoc of a huge pile of examination papers, muttering imprecations to himself all the while: "*O tempora!* Blast the wretch! After thirty years of the unutterable obstinacy of numbskull youth I should hardly have credited such foul construction. Who is the fool? Jackson, and he imagines he's going to Balliol! A useful forward, but a woebegone grammarian. *O mores*, this is certifiable. . . ."

Except for the occasional sharp crack of a hard-driven ball—the XI was playing a non-committal match against some local club as a diversion before next week's serious business at Lord's—the strained silence rested uneasily upon the room until, to everyone's relief, the appearance of the School Marshal created a brief interlude. "The Head Master wishes to see those who are leaving in his study any time during morning school," he finished his notices and lists of absentees from Chapel and Call-Over.

"May I go now, Sir?" asked a boy at the back of the room.

"Go, go, never to return," the "Little Man" agreed.

The usual leaving pi-jaw, of course, he thought, leaning over the parapet, watching the School opening pair knocking two undistinguished bowlers off their length on a plum pitch. Oh, well hit, Bryant, but, damn, there was his House Master walking across the Close; he'd better go and interview the Header, he supposed.

Through the unfamiliar, worn-stone passages of School House, deserted and echoing, he came to the Head Master's study, where, after waiting for two or three others, it was soon his turn.

One of the inconspicuous majority, except for rare visits to obtain a signature, during the five unexciting years he had been at the School he had never had occasion to come into contact with the Header, now standing by the window, gently rubbing his nose with the tips of his glasses, a mannerism he used so persistently that any new boy could supply a life-like imitation of it after his first term.

"Your eyes are younger than mine, boy," he said, without turning. "What is the—ah—score?"

"Sixty for none, Sir."

"Mr. Brackenbury informs me that he considers the boy, Bryant, to be one of the best batsmen we have had since the—ah—war, the best batsman. . . ."

"Yes, Sir."

"I understand that there is a good chance that he will be asked to—ah—captain the Lord's Schools' side against the Rest. We have not provided a captain since—ah—'06 or '07, I believe, no captain. . . ." He sat down, closing tired eyes with a sigh. "So you are leaving us, are you, boy, leaving . . ."

"Yes, Sir."

"Let me see now, are you going up to the Varsity?"

"No, Sir."

"What, then, are your—ah—plans?"

"I'm going into business, Sir."

"Into business, I see, business. . . . Well, boy, I wish you success in your—ah—chosen career. We shall rely on you to carry the School's tradition, its great tradition, into whatever—ah—walk of life you may find yourself, the tradition. . . ." Dreamily, in his sing-song, sermon voice, employing every affectation of speech and gesture, all the tricks for which he was famous, almost as though he were caricaturing himself, the Head Master pronounced the dissertation which custom must have made maddeningly banal.

"You will be confronted by many problems. Life is acted on a larger, a more complex—ah—stage than is our little society here. There are very many shades of black and white, and, in the world, it may be that you will not find the colours so sharply—ah—contrasted as they appear at School. It will not always be easy to distinguish good from—ah—evil, to distinguish. . . .

". . . whenever you are in doubt, ask yourself whether the action you are about to take would win the—ah—approbation of your schoolfellows, their approbation. . . ."

He paused. Could he expect a reply? "Yes, Sir," said the boy after a moment.

"Hah," the H.M. continued, still massaging his nose. "You will have to face temptations to which you have hitherto been—ah—unaccustomed. . . . some help from the little book in this envelope, which I put you on your—ah—honour not to open till you arrive home, this little book. . . .

"You will be keeping in touch with us, of course, through the Old Boys' Society, in touch with us. . . . You are not going up to the Varsity? No, I remember you intimated you had chosen to enter—ah—commerce. Do not forget when you are an—ah—merchant prince that there are many ways in which the Society can utilise—ah—moneys for the benefit of the School, can utilise money. . . . In our peaceful cloister here we shall watch you—ah—faring onward to—ah—renown and fortune. . . .

"Hah," he opened his eyes, twinkling at this outrageous lie (or was it simply a quotation?), and suddenly jerking his spectacles across his forehead to the end of his nose, an action which old boys all over the globe—even those to whom he had never spoken—could have duplicated in every detail.

"What did you say the name was? And the—ah—form?" He marked them off on a list. "Good-bye to you, then, boy. And good luck attend you, good luck attend . . ." For the first time the Head Master looked at him, giving him a kindly smile as they shook hands.

Outside the break was over. He had an excellent excuse for being late for the next hour; come to think of it, he might even cut it altogether. He glanced towards the Close, scored by worn, brown patches where the nets and House game pitches had been. Bryant was still in and had just carted a ball slap into College Road, but there were too many people watching; it would be safer to keep out of the way, he decided, wandering off in the direction of the friendly backwater, formed by a collection of Science buildings, squash and five courts, the gym., the "worker," and the swimming baths, which was a haunt of the "half world" of the School.

Groundsmen were struggling to remove goal-posts from a store room. It was strange to think that when, with everybody rather short of breath, Big Side played its first practice game in September he would not be there. . . .

Sitting on the edge of the bat-five courts' gallery, he examined the names carved in the wood, and the initials—sometimes two bracketed together: entertaining gossip, if you could follow the implications—scrawled all round. Then, with a pair of

compasses he had amongst the stuff he was still carrying, he started to scratch his own initials deeply into the wall. Not a very glorious memorial, though, perhaps, it would last longer than the memory of most of the School bloods, themselves, he thought, sentimentally.

Suddenly he remembered the mysterious envelope the Header had given him. Ripping it open, he read: "The Perils of Venereal Disease. A Warning to Young Men. By 'A Doctor.'" H'm, there might be a kick somewhere in it; the thing didn't look exciting, but you never knew; it was possible it would add to his knowledge of the subject.

After a few minutes' study he gave it up. So far as he could see, anyone who had the slightest connection with a member of the opposite sex to whom he was not married—even a kiss, the author was at pains to point out, was sufficient to carry infection—immediately contracted a fearful disease. Within a short while of "yielding to carnal lusts" you began to decay; first your fingers, nose, toes and ears dropped off, until in a week or so your arms and legs came adrift, and you died in great agony. All of which was proved by a terrifying photograph, which made him feel positively sick.

Very jolly! Evidently the author followed the tradition of the sportsmen who told small boys that if they played with themselves they would first turn blind, then be bundled off to the nearest asylum. However bad it was, sex could hardly be as disgusting as the writer of this revolting pamphlet—it had cost sixpence, he noticed—had tried to make out. He tore it into small pieces.

Until the clock struck and he heard the School stream noisily out from the last proper hour of the term—and of his life—he continued to chisel away with the completely spoilt compasses, a thin trickle of dust falling into the court below.

PETER CHAMBERLAIN

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"And Then the Music Stopped," at the New Theatre, "A Ship Comes Home," at the St. Martin's, "Ladies and Gentlemen," at the Strand, etc., etc.

Evidently nothing is too puerile to offer to our Coronation visitors. The country of Shakespeare, Jonson and Wycherley (to say nothing of Shaw and Maugham) is showing to visitors from China and Peru what English dramatists can achieve when they put their heart into it. Even the *Times* Dramatic Critic is being driven to abandon his usual urbanity, and to reveal in plain language—instead of between the lines—his just opinion of our staple theatrical diet. Farces which do not amuse alternate with thrillers which fail to thrill; and even the most competent actors are demoralised by the grotesqueness of the lines which they are expected to deliver. Mr. Willard at the New Theatre, Miss Isobel Jeans at the Strand, Mr. Michael Redgrave, Mr. Elliot Makeham and Miss Muriel Aked at the St. Martin's manage to put up a valiant fight. But Miss Laura Cowie gave what we believe (and hope) was the worst performance in a distinguished theatrical career, and Miss Phyllis Dare registering emotion in the party of Lady Charity Carstairs reminded us of some private theatricals which we once were privileged to see at Bognor Regis. These ladies, and their colleagues, deserve commiseration rather than obloquy. It is painful enough to sit through such plays as these—what must it be to act in them night after night? Pointless, tasteless and senseless, they appeal—not we hope successfully—to the most cretinous class in the community, and meanwhile good plays cannot find a backing or a home. We can recommend visitors to *Henry V*, *The Ascent of F.6*, *French Without Tears*, *The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse*, and *The Frog*, all of which in their enormously different ways are productions which hit the mark. Meanwhile where is Mr. Bertram Mills? The circus as an art has one inestimable advantage over the theatre; it eliminates automatically the incompetent. A tight-rope walker or a lion-tamer is either good or quickly dead.

"Wings of the Morning," at the Gaumont, Haymarket

The first full-length British film in technicolour has made moving postcards of the moving pictures. The colour is metallic but for most of the time very nice all the same. The film includes splendid views of London before the buses stopped, a highly coloured presentation of Derby Day and some very pretty Irish scenery. The medium is used very much like a new toy, and a great deal has got into the film for the simple (and good) reason that it looked pretty. Beside this enthusiasm for colour, the Irish brogue has been allowed to run wild. From this, one must deduce that the spread of the hyper-sensibility that recoils in horror from Oirish must have been arrested quickly and quietly somewhere near the centre of London. For those who have made the film clearly believe that you can't have too much of it. To add force to this conviction they have included Count John McCormack singing (in full technicolour) *Killarney* and *Believe Me if all Those Endearing Young Charms*. There is indeed so much emphasis on other charms that one hardly realised that this was Miss Annabella's first English and first colour appearance. Miss Annabella is a very pretty pinky-brown colour, her English is attractively imperfect. Opposite her, Mr. Henry Fonda, from America, acts very solemnly and competently. The story has to do with gypsies, gentry and horses, and breathes niceness, sweetness and goodness.

"Let's Dance," at the Regal

The sad fate of the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon recalls the danger for artists of a conscious striving for greatness. Not that one can suppose there is any chance yet of Mr. Astaire's public being lured away (as Haydon's was) by an exhibition of midgets—but even for him there is some risk in thinking that by taking thought he can elevate his art. Mr. Astaire lets fall the observation that he would like to merge the traditions of the classical ballet with the vitality of what we might call Astairism—and the suggestion falls among his admirers with a sickening thud. But the moment when this uneasy yearning for Art is most noticeable comes with the appearance, towards the end of *Let's Dance*, of a ballerina called Miss Harriet Hoctor. Though Miss Hoctor's main accomplishment seems to be her ability to dance on her toes with her head hanging down her back, it is as a portent that she is most to be dreaded. Soon, it seems, we are to have no ballet and no Astaire and only a deadly mezzo-brow mélange. This is a sad prospect, but fortunately it is still only a prospect. The decay has not gone far yet, and the indications may turn out to have been only an unseasonable russet and not a harbinger of autumn at all. Apart from Miss Hoctor and her implications, this film has once more the conventionalised and formal delight of former days. Miss Rogers acts brilliantly and gives no sign of wanting to play Joan of Arc. Mr. E. E. Horton and Mr. E. Blore are enormously funny. The jokes, if they are oldish, are more fully flavoured for age, and the situations, if familiar, are all the more dear for old times' sake. Mr. George Gershwin's tunes have a stately negroid cadence. Mr. N. A. Gershwin's lyrics are admirable but too short. And the sheen on the floors is like stars on the sea.

THE COMING WEEK

SUNDAY, May 23rd—
- S. K. Ratcliffe on "The Archbishop's Recall to Religion," Conway Hall, 11.
- Christening of Hampstead Ambulance for Spain by Sybil Thorndike, Whitestone Pond, 11.30.
- Beatrice King on "Education for a New Society in U.S.S.R.," 153 Finchley Road, 6.15.

MONDAY, May 24th—
- Vyvyan Adams, Major H. L. Nathan, Dr. Maude Royden and others on "Abyssinia at Geneva," Central Hall, 8.
- Pat Sloan on "Soviet Democracy," 86 Rochester Row, 8.30.

TUESDAY, May 25th—
- Dr. R. R. Kuczynski on "Future Trends in Population," Royal Society, Burlington House, 5.15.
- Dr. Ernst Kris on "Principles of Caricature," Warburg Inst., 5.30.
- Spanish Dances by Betty Langdon-Davies and others, also film, "Madrid To-day," Hampstead Town Hall, 8.
- "A Month in the Country," Westminster.

WEDNESDAY, May 26th—
- Haldane Memorial Lecture: Sir Arthur Eddington on "The Reign of Relativity, 1915–1937," Birkbeck College, 6.
- Conway Memorial Lecture: Dr. Stanton Coit on "The One Sure Foundation for Democracy," Conway Hall, 7.
- Royal Horticultural Society's Show, Chelsea.
- London Music Festival, Queen's Hall. Also May 28th.
- "He Was Born Gay," Queen's.

FRIDAY, May 28th—
- Twenty-seventh National Peace Congress, Friends House. Till May 31st. Particulars from National Peace Council, 39 Victoria St., S.W.1.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

> The Russian forests are going down under the axe. Millions of trees are perishing, the homes of wild animals and birds are being laid waste, the rivers are dwindling and drying up, wonderful scenery is disappearing never to return. . . .

THIS was written nearly forty years ago and the reader will remember how Tchehov's country doctor Astrov, who serves as the mouthpiece of his own opinions in *Uncle Vanya*, produces his three maps of the changing flora and fauna.

> All the elks have vanished . . . there are still the same swamps and mosquitoes, the same lack of roads and poverty, and typhus and diphtheria and fires in the district. . . . We have here a degeneration that is the result of too severe a struggle for existence.

Astrov, it will be remembered, was a bit of a crank who was predicting just those climatic changes which have produced soil erosion and periodic floods in the dustbowl area of the Middle West, owing to too rapid and too ruthless an exploitation of nature. Tchehov-Astrov must have been barking up the wrong tree if we may believe Mr. Smolka:

> Russia's timber wealth is indeed enormous. Her forests cover a larger area than the whole of Europe. Siberia's woods alone are as big as France and Great Britain together . . . and all the books and newspapers in the world could be printed on them for several hundred years to come.

Half a million trees were ready for export from Igarka in 1936, "only one per cent. of what we could cut in Siberia each year." The figures seem peculiar, but statistics are notoriously confusing. But one wonders how many of those half-million trees are being replanted and, if not, whether Tchehov-Astrov would have felt happy about it. We must remember that the Middle West of America appeared the world's model of material prosperity and progress until only about half a dozen years ago when the soil began to blow away.

* * *

Forty Thousand Against the Arctic, Russia's Polar Empire, by H. P. Smolka (Hutchinson, 12*s.* 6*d.*) is a fascinatingly interesting book, but it is inevitably superficial. Mr. Smolka paid literally a flying visit to the region and his knowledge of Russian was imperfect. Thus, when a convict referred, so we must suppose, to his fellow-prisoners as *golubchiki*, he translates the word literally, exclaiming: *Little Doves indeed! I thought I had landed in the camp asylum.* The word *golubchik*, equivalent to darling, is the commonest term of endearment in the language. Yet, in spite of being liable to make such an astonishing blunder, Mr. Smolka has written a most convincing book and records, we may be sure, the exact spirit of enthusiasm of the comsomols pioneering in the polar basin. The last words of his book are:

> I have seen them doing something useful and good. This twentieth-century pioneering in the Polar regions is a wonderful thing. An ice wall of thousands of years' standing is pulled down, a road blasted through it, melted away by the fire of human intelligence. This work is symbolic for man's mission on this earth, and the ice-breaker-Captain's cry from his bridge is battle cry and victory song: THE ICE IS BROKEN!

Russians have always been particularly attracted by the theoretical possibilities of large-scale experiments, and ever since the eighteenth century there have been large numbers of attempts to translate general ideas into practice. Thus it was, if I remember right, in the reign of Catharine that thousands of mulberry trees were planted and hundreds of Italian silkworm experts dumped on the Volga delta, to start a Russian silk industry—all of which was washed away by the next big flood. The enormous advantage which the Bolshevik Government enjoys is that for the first time enthusiasm for such schemes is widespread among the people, and thus for the first time they have every chance of success. Mr. Smolka's book reflects this wonderful spirit of optimism—which is not very different from the optimism of the American people when they were engaged in gathering in the vast natural wealth of their country, riches which it now turns out they were squandering. Are the Russians unwittingly doing the same or not with their planned development?

* * *

The aim of the Russians is to establish a sea-borne trade during the summer from ports in the Arctic and thus get an outlet for Siberian timber, which can be floated down the huge rivers: Yenesei, Obi, Lena. In addition they mean to establish during August a sea-route to the Far East and to America, which is actually shorter than the trans-Siberian and strategically less open to attack. This can already be done in favourable years with ice-breakers directed by air reconnaissance. More and bigger ice-breakers are, of course, being built. They are also busy developing the fur trade, canning fish, boring for oil and mining and preparing to mine deposits of nickel, copper, platinum, gold, salt and coal. All this sounds familiar and is in full swing in Canada and the United States. What is new is that such developments are being pushed up farther north than ever before. Little towns are sent out completely equipped to winter through the six months of darkness and are eager to grapple with their work in the summer when everything is knee-deep in mud. Yet there is a fascination about the Arctic; a fascination which Mr. Smolka has caught brilliantly—the sunlight is continuous, the tang of frost never far away and a host of ailments are unknown. To make up for them is the fear of scurvy. Scientists are therefore busy growing lettuces by electric light in subterranean hot-beds during the arctic night, for vitamin D is absolutely essential. There are about ninety days when plants can grow above ground, and if safeguarded from frost, they grow wonderfully fast in the continuous sunlight. The problem is then to keep them fresh throughout the winter, and this can almost certainly be done by gas-storage, as apples are now being kept in England. Each little centre is in touch with the outside world with radio, and is equipped with every kind of scientific amenity. Yet in Astrov's words: "*There are still the same swamps and mosquitoes, the same lack of roads.*" For the Russians entirely lack what we are told is the great Italian virtue: they are not road-builders. In the Arctic they are apparently not planning to build either roads or railways at present, but rely on river steamers and air communication. But in winter the rivers are frozen and one gathers that the regular air service is suspended.

* * *

Winter is the season for felling timber in the south and for hunting in the north, which is carried on by the native tribes. A fundamental difference between Russian and American is the attitude to the natives, partly due to the fact that the Siberian tribes are not warlike. The object of the U.S.S.R. is to educate and emancipate these peoples, numbering 150,000 and until recently rapidly decreasing, and to train them to develop the resources of the Arctic, since they alone can stand the climate permanently. First attempts to take away their children failed: the children died. Now "a brake has been put on the process" and schools are set up on the tundra, after which the most intelligent young people are sent to cultural bases, where Mr. Smolka saw them being taught to dance the fox-trot. The Shamans or medicine men are ridiculed on every occasion and native traditions uprooted. The whole treatment bears a close resemblance to missionary activity in Africa or Polynesia, and we have the finished product writing proudly:

> Please tell the world that I have been born in darkness, but that now that I have seen the light I regard it as my duty to go further and further.

Comsomol and missionary no doubt will regard the comparison with equal horror, but to me the only difference between them is in the nature of their beliefs. When they have wide intellectual interests, missionaries, whether Christian or Marxist, are very nearly the salt of the earth, and spiritually the most enviable of men. Such was Klimov, who grew up as one of the wild children, who roamed Russia after the war, was salvaged by the G.P.U. and is now an ethnologist, archaeologist and Arctic explorer. Everything such a man does seems good.

DAVID GARNETT

PLATO IN MODERN DRESS

Plato To-Day. By R. H. S. CROSSMAN. *Allen and Unwin.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

"The World War of 1914," says Mr. Crossman, "has made Plato intelligible to us." This is quite true. Intellectually, it was a useful war. It and its consequences have enabled us to understand not only Plato, but also Caligula, theocracy, the Spanish Inquisition, and the customs of savages. For the moment, however, it is only Plato that concerns us.

It used to be the custom to ignore Plato's politics, and treat him solely as metaphysician and artist. The *Republic* was not taken seriously, and no one even troubled to think what it would be like to live in. When I say that it was not taken seriously, I do not mean that it was not studied, but that it was read, as traditionally admired works usually are read, without any regard to its real significance. Teachers did not, for instance, point out to their pupils how much of Plato's recommendations has been adopted in the government of the Catholic Church. The various phases of the doctrine of Ideas were carefully studied, expounded and made the subject of controversy, but the Platonic State was treated as a mere fantasy, unconnected with practical life.

Mr. Crossman has reversed all this: it is with Plato the politician that he is concerned. He tells what the philosopher thought of affairs in his own day, and what part he and his disciples played in party conflicts; he then brings him into our world, gives us his comments on democracy, Fascism and Communism, and lets us know where he himself disagrees with these imagined comments. It is refreshing to find a competent authority treating the sage with so little reverence. There is all the more force in the final recognition of Plato's greatness:

> Even admitting all these criticisms, I still find the *Republic* the greatest book on political philosophy which I have read. The more I read it, the more I hate it: and yet I cannot help returning to it time after time. For it *is* philosophy. It tries to reach the truth by rational discussion and is itself a pattern of the disinterested research which it extols.

This is, to my mind, a completely just estimate. Plato was not only an exquisite artist and a profound metaphysician; he was also, in his speculations on practical affairs, coherent, comprehensive, and profound. It may be our duty to hate him, as it is to hate Milton's Satan; but it is a difficult duty, which is performed with reluctance.

Plato To-Day has interested me all the more because I have experienced in my own mind the coming alive of the *Republic* since the war. When I visited Russia in 1920, I remarked, to the indignation of Communists and Platonists alike, that the aims of the Soviet State were almost the same as Plato's. Since then, in re-reading him, it is more the resemblances with Fascism that have impressed me. There is to be no music except the Greek analogues of "Rule Britannia" and "The British Grenadiers." No one must be allowed to question that those who die in battle go to heaven, not because this is thought true, but because it promotes courage in war. And so on. The part played by propaganda is thoroughly modern, except in one particular: where education was confined to the upper classes, it was easier for them to be openly cynical to each other about the lies that they taught to the populace.

It is curious that Plato has always been one of the chief heroes of those who love culture, for he himself hated culture in the kind of way in which St. Anthony hated courtesans. He was an ascetic, who held that music and poetry, truth and beauty, should be sacrificed to political exigencies; he resembled certain highly civilised men in our own day who have renounced civilisation for Communism. More profoundly, he resembled Pascal.

Mr. Crossman, when he makes Plato discourse on modern questions, successfully resists the temptation to which most authors succumb when they introduce distinguished ghosts for such a purpose: he does not use his hero merely as a mouthpiece for his own opinions. His Plato praises British "democracy" for being so much less democratic than Athens in his day, and hopes that the "noble lie" of self-government will not be exploded. He admires Stalin's short way with rivals, and his "sly humour" in promulgating a democratic constitution, but thinks it regrettable to select the ruling class from among manual workers. In Germany he finds much to admire in Hitler, but is shocked to find that he employs the philosophers, and not they him. A final chapter, on "Why Plato failed," regards it as his chief defect that he believed political wisdom to be confined to aristocrats. I do not think, myself, that this criticism, just as it is, goes to the heart of the matter. The English eighteenth century had an equal belief in aristocracy, but produced a polity which was by no means Platonic. To my mind, the essential defect of Plato is that he believes in a tyranny of the wise, which is to compel the herd to *act* wisely by means of a mixture of force and cajolery, while encouraging it to *think* even more foolishly than before. And this, in turn, is connected with a purely intellectual error, namely that absolute truth is ascertainable. Plato was influenced by geometry and by the Pythagorean mysticism about numbers; he thought that the demonstrative certainty which is attainable in pure mathematics is also to be achieved in practical affairs, and by the same method, namely abstract reasoning. Catholic theologians hold the same view; so do those who believe in the verbal inspiration of the Koran, Das Kapital, or Mein Kampf. The political outcome of such a belief is an autocratic persecuting theocracy. Those who, in agreement with most modern men of science, believe that ascertainable truth is piecemeal, partial, uncertain and difficult, hesitate to persecute others for rejecting doctrines which, after all, are probably more or less erroneous.

Plato's love of dogmatism and autocracy is, of course, intimately connected with the defeat of Athens by Sparta. Athens was democratic, turbulent, and full of notable individuals; Sparta was an aristocratic corporative State, which never produced a single person of note except in war. Since Sparta won, Sparta was right, and Plato made himself the sycophant of the victors. The standard of values which led to this line of thought and action is one which hardly commands respect; but I fear many of our intellectuals would behave in the same way if we were conquered by the Nazis.

Mr. Crossman deserves high praise for making Plato real, in spite of the fact that he teaches about him in a university. He must greatly stimulate his pupils' interest in the *Republic*. There is in his book no trace of the hieratic stained-glass dignified immobility which is apt to be imposed upon the great men of the past in academic instruction. His Plato was interested in practical questions which still interest us, and made the sort of mistakes to which we are all liable. There were sides of Plato with which he does not deal, but Plato the politician was, I make no doubt, just such a man as Mr. Crossman represents him as being.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

NEW NOVELS

The Gay and Melancholy Flux. By WILLIAM SAROYAN. *Faber and Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Three Comrades. By ERICH MARIA REMARQUE. *Hutchinson.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Revenge for Love. By WYNDHAM LEWIS. *Cassell.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Brother Petroc's Return. By S. M. C. *Chatto and Windus.* 6*s.*

Somehow or other I missed my turn on Mr. Saroyan's *Flying Trapeze*. Others spoke of the dizzy but exhilarating views which were to be obtained from that contraption, but the International Literary Funfair now covers so many acres and spawns so constant a succession of brand new sideshows that it is almost impossible to fight one's way back against the crowd. Fiction, like films and jazz, passes down the river of oblivion, an unending flotilla; you must catch your ship as it comes abreast or lose it for good. Hence the guides and confidence men; hence that combination of Cook's Conducted Tour and Baedeker, the Book Society; hence Sir Hugh Walpole, Mr. Howard Spring, and, I suppose, myself. Anyhow I am glad that Mr. Saroyan's third venture comes into view while I am at the telescope. There she goes, boys, a brave flaunting craft: *The Gay and Melancholy Flux*, they call her. Dip the flag, boys, while I run around behind and get out the rockets—if there are any dry ones left after that flood we had a month back when the *Maiden Castle* went by.

Mr. Saroyan is worth our salute, being not only a new sort of writer but a real one. Since he is passionately in earnest, his writing never descends to fancy tricks for their own sake. His new book is classified as short stories, but not many of the thirty or so pieces it contains answer to the popular notion of that form. Some do, and one of them, *Love*, is among the best short stories I have read for years. But for the most part they are rather essays or, if you like, prose poems: lyrical attempts to

discover just what in this crazy world a man may grasp and hold on to for certain. Mr. Saroyan indicates his outlook upon life in the admirable title he has chosen, more exactly perhaps in such a sentence as this : " This life is a mess all right, but you can't say it isn't a magnificent mess." He wants to make everybody feel both the mess and the magnificence with the same intensity as he does himself, and such is the strength of his equipment as a writer that he often succeeds. Like many a warm-spirited young artist, he cannot endure the spectacle of the writer (himself or another) sitting in his room, polishing his phrases while the world flounders outside. To hell with art, he says : to hell with the idea of letting the rest of the world go by. For this attitude we must respect him, while remembering that it is only through conscious and highly organised art forms that the deepest and truest and most consoling things can ever get said at all. Even *King Lear* has its exits and its entrances, is disciplined. And our respect for Mr. Saroyan would soon wither were he not, for all his contempt of art, himself a true artist. He pretends that style comes instinctively with sincerity, that " it is impossible to write one paragraph about man without having plot and atmosphere, and what is known as style." I doubt if he believes that, and for myself I certainly don't. To handle words as he does—freshly and exactly, though copiously—requires a prolonged apprenticeship ; and my guess is that the major formative influences in his style have been Walt Whitman and the Bible, with a dash (thank heaven, a *judicious* dash) of James Joyce, that bottomless cornucopia which is, as someone once said, " damned good to steal from." Saroyan's oriental mind, with its natural predilection for heroic splendour and long-windedness, reacts fruitfully to the biblical inspiration, which he seems to recognise himself by calling one section of his book *Psalms*. But the richness is jazzed and quickened by a sense of humour and of multifarious life so contemporary that he makes me feel like an old calendar leaf in the waste-paper basket, and warmed too by something of Whitman's all-embracing love of the mass of ordinary American people. He is, in the best sense, a patriotic writer. In the thick of the bewildered and desperate ranks of the unemployed he hears laughter, and the sound has for him an almost mystical significance :

> It is a tremendous thing, a pious thing : *they laugh*. Sometimes they laugh. I know that they weep too, in the dark of night, walking alone, going nowhere, lost and out of everything, but they laugh too, and I have heard their laughter. They have nothing, not a thing but life, the same mad and incredible thing that is in millionaires, basically the only thing. They are homeless and penniless and half-starved, yet they laugh, and to me this is a magnificent thing, *the* glorious fact of these ungodly days, the great American novel . . . And I say to myself . . . make this laughter roar through the land, make it flood through the hearts of everyone alive here, make it travel from the great South Western desert to the North Atlantic ; make America hear itself laughing. In the wilderness, in the blackness of these evil days.

There are plenty of writers about, anxious that we should all have our noses rubbed in the mud. That is contemporary life, they say ; smell that, and then return to your ivory tower if you dare. Mr. Saroyan too sprawls in the mud : it seems to him the only dignified attitude left ; but his work exhilarates instead of depressing because it is rooted in love, not hate. Not mud, but the flowers pushing up through the mud : *they* are the object of his passionate search. That is why his laughing pessimism makes the pessimism of many others seem brittle and inhuman. He thinks he could " turn out a hack novel in two weeks that might be a best-seller," and I am sure he could. I also think it quite possible that he will write a very fine novel once he has checked his tendency to repetition and rhetoric and overcome his repugnance for the scaffolding of fiction—plot, atmosphere, and so on. The skilful artist leaves no trace of his labours in the finished work ; but to suppose that buildings of any size and permanence can do without scaffolding is to suppose a vain thing. Nothing, however, could prevent my being deeply moved by *The Gay and Melancholy Flux*, which I happened to read during the intervals of listening to the Coronation ceremony last week. For those who enjoy contrasts, here was a contrast indeed : the thunderous and golden certainties of Handel faced by Saroyan's humorous, puzzled scepticism. Against Handel indeed he could not compete, but when the pompous accents of a toast-master announced : " The Queen has been anointed . . . the Archbishop mounts the steps," I turned the knob : Cosmo Cantuar and his whole insubstantial pageant faded, to be replaced by a very different circus, ramshackle but somehow more real : America as it looks to the Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze.

Three Comrades is Herr Remarque's third novel, and it will give much pleasure to a large body of readers. The prodigious success of *All Quiet on the Western Front* was due, not only, as many supposed, to its photographic reproduction of life at the front as the common soldier saw it, but to the author's gift of imaginative penetration into the soldier's suffering and joy and indifference. This quality remains fresh in his new book, which relates the escapades, in the period following the inflation, of three young men whose friendship was cemented in the trenches. They set up a motor-repair workshop, and it is a measure of the author's hold upon reality that he can arouse, in one mechanically quite inept, a breathless interest in the details of motor-racing, repairs, and tricky exchange transactions. The story builds itself around the love affair of one of the *Drei auf der Tankstelle* and Pat Hollmann ; it is hardly, as it pretends to be, a study of post-war depression in Germany so much as a pure love story, which ends sadly because the heroine dies of consumption. Herr Remarque makes a feeble attempt to link this personal tragedy to the tragedy of the times by a reference to bad feeding in the war period ; but, after all, consumptive heroines are as old as, and older than, *La Dame aux Camélias*. In fact the young men seem, in the first half of the book, to be having a very good time : they appear to have enough money for endless drinks, occasional theatres, and fortnights at the seaside. Indeed their rum-drinking is described *ad nauseam*, and it is with a slight surprise that we encounter phrases that tell of the bleak horror of existence. What is particularly attractive about the book is its presentation of the German genius for comradeship and *Freundschaft*, for making the most of little events and expeditions and dinners at country inns : the reverse side of the S.A. route-marches and the totalitarian bugles of to-day. The period is pre-Hitler and there is a Nazi murder, though neither Nazis nor Hitler is mentioned by name. The minor characters are a delight, and it is altogether a most enjoyable novel.

Mr. Wyndham Lewis, like Mr. Saroyan, is impatient of scaffolding, and in his long new novel, *The Revenge for Love*, tries to make do with a vaguely picaresque structure. The opening section, which describes an English Communist imprisoned in Spain for subversive propaganda, is admirable ; the author's

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HILLMAN

satirical humour plays with equal effect over the rather comic school-masterish Englishman and his casually venal warders: the political conversations are delightfully futile. The Communist escapes and returns with a crippled leg to Bloomsbury, where he is lionised; and here the author's satire grows more obvious and cumbrous, so that we are tired long before he has finished. Nor is his own cultural equipment secure enough to attack Bloomsbury on its own ground: there is much talk of Braque (spelled throughout Bracque), and a girl is said to possess "a deep laugh like the big baying notes on a 'cello violin."

Brother Petroc's Return is a gentle and pious tale of a Benedictine monk whose supposed death in 1549 turns out to be no more than a miraculous trance; on the re-opening of his tomb in 1929 he is gradually restored to the full enjoyment of his faculties. I have no objection to this sort of theme, quite the reverse; but the author, who is a Dominican nun, has shattered at the outset the slender thread of plausibility that is essential by the casual account she gives of the effect of the astounding discovery upon the monks who make it. The Abbot's "astonishment was redoubled when he saw the eyelids move"; and the Subprior remarks: "It is incredible, but I really believe the man is alive." After four centuries it is not enough.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THE ENGLISH IN INDIA

The I.C.S.: The Indian Civil Service. By SIR EDWARD BLUNT. *Faber and Faber.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Sir Edward Blunt has written a very pleasant book. His knowledge is wide, and he draws an attractive picture of the Service as it has been in the past and as it appears to-day to one who has played a distinguished part in its operations. It is an illuminating book, not less in what it omits than in what it contains. Almost all the real problems of controversy are avoided. There is nothing about the fusion of executive and judiciary. There is no discussion of the relations between the minister and officials whose primary allegiance is rather to a past technique than to a contemporary policy. There is nothing about Amritsar and Meerut, and the light they cast upon habits in the Service which are of real importance to its understanding. Sir Edward's picture hardly leaves one with the realisation that there is in India a seething mass of fundamental problems in each item of which the member of the I.C.S. is an essential element. His book is kindly, urbane, balanced. Its reader would hardly imagine from its pages that India is the scene of a vast challenge to colonial dominion the consequences of which will be momentous for the world.

Not that the book is without its value. It contains an interesting, even amusing, account of the I.C.S. before the Mutiny. Its account of district administration and land revenue settlement is an excellent piece of simplification in a realm where the materials are complex indeed. But Sir Edward seems almost consciously to have avoided the real problems to which the Service gives rise. His assumptions do not question any of the orthodox postulates from which the average imperialist starts; yet there is hardly one of these assumptions upon which there does not exist a controversial literature. He says, quite rightly, that many of the most passionate nationalists get on well with particular civilians. But he never discusses the meaning, in the context of his book, of his own phrase that "there has possibly been no time, even after the Mutiny, when the British Government has been more hated than during the last sixteen years." Probably Sir Edward is right in saying that this "hatred of the system has rarely been accompanied, even among extremists, by a personal dislike of the British officers who have to work it." But there is much about the system he does not tell upon which information would have been helpful to judgment. The relation of the I.C.S. to the Viceroy and to Lieutenant-Governors, the part of the I.C.S. in the working of reserved powers, the work of officials in elected bodies, the inner nature of the Political Department, the technique of promotion, the adequacy of the system whereby a half-trained lawyer can become a judge, the relation of the official to the nationalist movement: on all these matters, to take only some notable examples, Sir Edward is silent. One may be sure he has amply reflected about them. His discreet silence renders his book far less helpful than it might otherwise have been.

H. J. LASKI

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is the period covered in Mr. Sean O'Faolain's new edition of Wolfe Tone's diaries; one of the strangest subjective pictures of the time that is to be had. Wolfe Tone, republican patriot, refugee, conspirator, met Grouchy, Tom Paine, Carnot, Napoleon, and many other famous personalities in the course of his wild career; and it was the Duke of Wellington who later said of him, "A most extraordinary man, and his history is the most curious history of those times." Nor would his diaries have been any less entertaining if he had been a bootblack all his life.

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IS THERE "NO MORE TO BE SAID"?

Poor Fred. The People's Prince. By SIR GEORGE YOUNG. *Oxford University Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

We have always been brought up to believe that of all the Hanoverian line, the one really contemptible personality is Frederick Prince of Wales. Hervey, Horace Walpole and the lampoonist have all combined to impress posterity with his failings and his insignificance. In this book Sir George Young sets out to correct these self-appointed critics, and he certainly succeeds in making the reader question the justice of their verdict, but it is less certain if he will carry the reader with him in his effort to show the Prince not only as a heaven-sent politician but as an exemplary son, husband and father. To have achieved this he would have to have been more lavish with his authorities and more explicit about them. From the text it appears that he has had access to original documents at Windsor, but this is apparently unacknowledged. Moreover, a biography which sets out with the avowed object of glorifying the crown at the expense of democratic institutions will put on their guard many readers who, when they come to the sentence about the Prince contributing "that co-ordination and control of reconstruction by the Crown that our day demands," may almost begin to sigh for the malice of Hervey and Walpole.

Perhaps the most familiar thing about the Prince to-day, apart from his dog at Kew and the epitaph, is his quarrel with his parents when he dragged his wife in the pangs of childbirth from Hampton Court to St. James's Palace. It has always been supposed that the Prince, pricked on by vanity and vindictiveness, compelled an unwilling wife to follow him out of Hampton Court. Sir George suggests that the Princess herself was determined that the child should not be born in Hampton Court, and it is difficult to disagree with him when it is known that on two previous occasions, the Princess, thinking the confinement was beginning, had gone to St. James's Palace. Fortunately it was a girl, else the Jacobites might have had their revenge for 1688, for even the Queen said, "if there had been a brave jolly boy instead of this poor ugly little she-mouse I should not have been cured of my suspicions."

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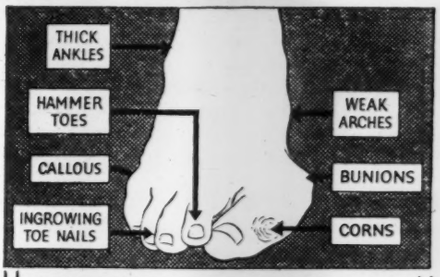

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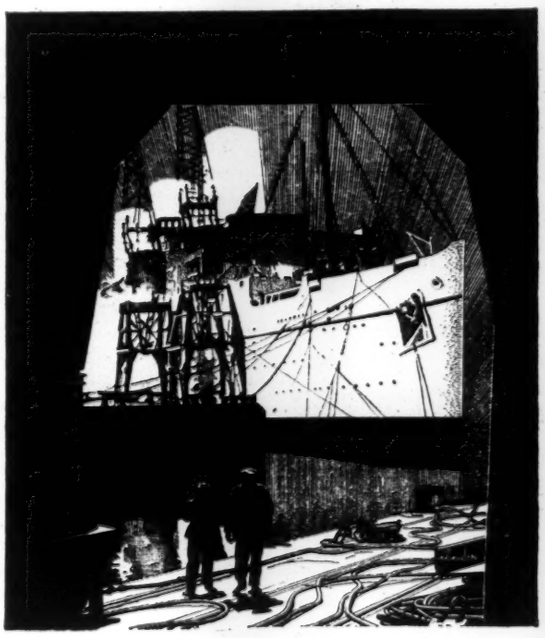

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The whole episode is distressing and rather disgusting, and whether the Prince or Princess was principally to blame is scarcely relevant: there will be some people to sympathise with the King and to feel that there was justification for his description of his son's behaviour as "the most insolent and premeditated indignities offered to me and the Queen, Your Mother." The populace, which is seldom the best judge of these things, was strongly on the Prince's side who further encouraged them by crying out as he left St. James's Palace "God bless the King and God bless the poor." The author thinks there is little doubt that both King George and Queen Caroline intended that Prince Frederick should become Elector of Hanover while Prince William (the "Butcher") should succeed to the throne of England. It is certainly curious that until the death of George I the Prince never came to England, so that all his education and training till he was twenty was German. Yet the way in which he adapted himself to English life in spite of this handicap suggests that he was not the ridiculous figure of our history books. Also his political activities were by no means contemptible and by no means discreditable. He played a large part in uniting the various sections of the Opposition to form a common front against "old Brazenface" Walpole. But he was an inconsistent politician, and when Walpole fell he found himself insufficiently rewarded and sought a reconciliation with the King. The Prince is seen perhaps at his best in private life entertaining politicians and social celebrities at Cliveden, fishing for the salmon which then abounded in Cliveden Reach, playing cricket and writing songs for his open-air theatre and signing himself in a letter to his eldest son as "your friend and father." One example of the author's misplaced ingenuity must be given. He suggests that the Princess may have poisoned her husband, apparently because she was far gone with her ninth child "and may have had a pathological mentality." We shall soon be told, and some alas! may believe, that Queen Victoria really poisoned the Prince Consort. Easily the most important thing in the book is the political testament drawn up by the Prince for his eldest son and based "on the ideas of my grandfather and best friend George I." He hoped that his son would succeed in separating Hanover from England, a policy which he said had been urged on him by George I. He suggested that one of his younger sons should reign in Hanover and that from that moment Jacobitism would be rooted out. Most interesting of all is the advice which has generally been attributed to Bute or the Princess, "Convince this Nation that you are not only an Englishman born and bred, but that you are also this by inclination."

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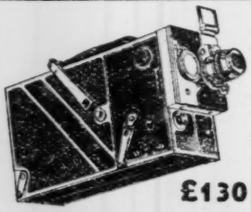

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IMPERIAL PROSPECT

The Empire in the World. By SIR ARTHUR WILLERT, K.B.E., B. K. LONG, H. V. HODSON. Edited by E. THOMAS COOK. *Oxford University Press.* 10s. 6d.

The Imperial Conference is in session. Much water has flowed under the bridges since last it met; but the broad issues before it are the same, though their emphasis is different. The internal articulations of the Empire are not this time so much in the foreground; there may be unofficial headshakings over the anomalous position of the Irish Free State, but since the Free State itself has ostentatiously cut the Conference as well as the Coronation, no official move can be expected. Economic policy, foreign relations and defence will take the bulk of the Conference's time; more than ever it has to consider not merely the Empire but the Empire in the world. Hence the appositeness of the volume bearing—and justifiably bearing—this title.

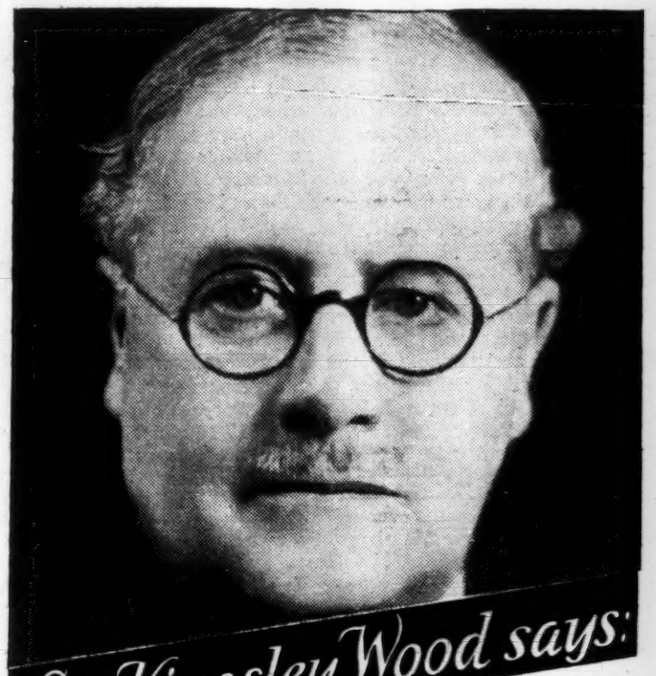
Sir Arthur Willert leads off with a sweeping résumé of the post-war world situation; the folly of Versailles, the incapacity of the League—weakened first by the defection of the United States and then by the resulting half-heartedness of Great Britain—to remedy its defects; the stresses of the great depression; the successful challenge of Japan, Italy and Germany; and the ideological line-up of Communism, Fascism and democracy. Mr. Hodson seconds with a still briefer glance at the economic background. Mr. Long tackles the constitutional problem. He opposes to the great authority of Professor Berriedale Keith (who has maintained that the Statute of Westminster leaves the ultimate sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament unimpaired) what one may call the practical Dominion view. However, the wording of the Statute may be interpreted by jurists, the definitive interpretation is that of practical politics. By them, the supremacy of Westminster has been abolished, and for any subsequent Parliament to attempt—as legally it could perfectly well do—to repeal the Statute would mean the disruption of the Empire.

Mr. Hodson, trying to disentangle some logical thread of economic policy from the makeshift inconsistencies of the last few years, is very nearly baffled. But the relations between home agricultural policy and the claims of Dominion producers, the question of preferences, of subsidies and dumping, of migration, monetary policy and the late lamented Open Door, are here clarified as much as their nature permits; and the writer, sadly hampered by knowledge of political necessity, tries to import a little common sense into the Ottawa tariff formula. Economists will boggle at his suggestions, and well they may; but even principles so widely open to criticism as these are preferable to a chaos which is unprincipled in every sense.

Foreign relations fall to Sir Arthur Willert, whose gently devastating narrative of the National Government's policy makes one wonder—even more than Mr. Hodson's penetrating comments on fiscal matters—why the Right Book Club risked shocking its members into an apoplexy by choosing this book for their first issue. He concludes, however, with a qualified optimism which his facts hardly seem to warrant.

As a commentary on the agenda of the Conference this book is eminently satisfactory. From any more fundamental viewpoint it is, however, disappointing. Apart from a few slightly peevish paragraphs of reproof from Sir Arthur Willert, there is hardly a hint that anyone may possibly regard the Empire otherwise than as a blessing to the world. One may have no quarrel with that loose alliance, ornamented with the paraphernalia of permanency, to which Great Britain and the Dominions belong; but there is after all much to be said about India besides the few generalities—as it were a Third Reading speech in support of the India Bill—which we are given here; and while quite probably British Africa is no worse governed than it would be under any other imperialist rule, need Sir Arthur Willert really be so surprised that some Englishmen dislike what is done there in their name? It is the note of scepticism which is lacking; and for all the risk of offending a few bearers of the White Man's Burden the book would have been infinitely the better for its presence.

HONOR CROOME



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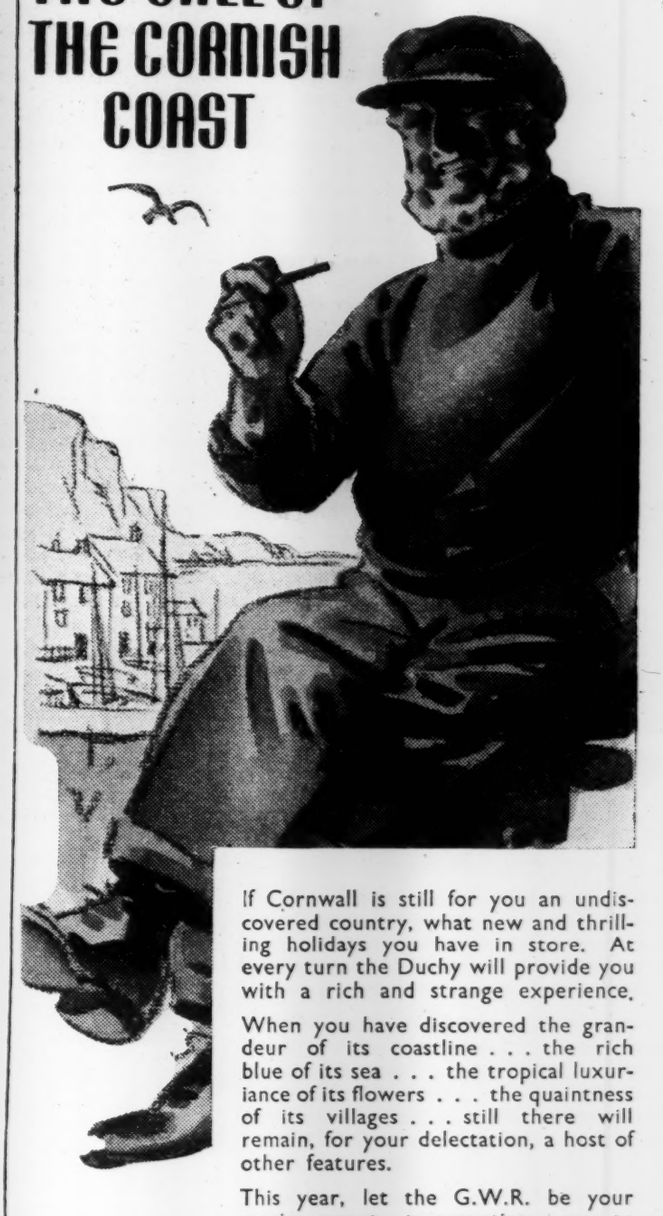

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BOLINGBROKE

Bolingbroke. By SIR CHARLES PETRIE. *Collins.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Sir Charles Petrie informs his readers that it is no easy task to compress in one volume of moderate length the life of a man who was at once statesman, man of letters, and citizen of the world, and did not die till he was seventy-three. "Much that is interesting," he adds, "has had to be excluded." Room has been found, nevertheless, for a good deal that is rather tiresome. There are too many paragraphs like the brace which begin "In his pursuit of women, on the other hand . . ." and end "much must be forgiven to hot-blooded young men-about-town"—two and a half pages of he-man, not to say truculent, stuff about eighteenth-century vice and twentieth-century squeamishness. Letters and documents of considerable length are quoted in full: nearly five pages go to the text of Strafford's instructions on his 1711 mission to the Hague, drafted it is true by Bolingbroke, but in his most ample official style: "Upon your arrival in Holland, whither you are to repair with all possible diligence, you shall first take the opportunity of . . ." etc. But Sir Charles Petrie no doubt knows his public. They like to be reminded both of the shady side of high life and of the once familiar pabulum of schooldays, of the "well-known verses" about poor Fred who was alive and is dead, of Sarah Jennings and Mrs. Masham, of Walpole's corruption and Marlborough's meanness, but they also appreciate references to *H. M. C.*: Bath MSS, Vol. I, p. 191, and are given a comfortable feeling of contact with experts when they find in the notes that "historians are under a deep debt of gratitude to Professor Trevelyan for his labours in unravelling these early negotiations in the *English Historical Review*, Jan., 1934, p. 100–105." They must be made to realise, too, that their author is up to date if not original in his views:

> It is now widely held that the substitution of William III for James II was but the triumph of a small and unscrupulous minority working entirely in its own interests, which were in conflict with those of the mass of the English people.
>
> Anne has generally been dismissed by historians as a colourless, if well-intentioned, individual, but a study of her letters shows her in a very different, and far more unpleasing, light. She was a venomous, vulgar-minded woman . . .

If one were to confess to a doubt of Sir Charles' success in this instance, it would be on the score that he seems a little too apologetic and half-hearted about his hero. After all, if one is to be made the subject of a popular biography, one has some claim to be believed in by one's trumpeter. If the expression may be permitted, Sir Charles would have put his man across more convincingly if he had either scorned or gloried in the view that Bolingbroke was bogus. For bogus he certainly looks by the time his biographer has done with him. He wrote some rather heavy and priggish letters from abroad in his youth, made a number of effective speeches and worked really hard over the Treaty of Utrecht. But one has only to put him alongside Walpole to see how flimsy he is as a politician. The Whig historians may be men of straw, but this is no theme on which to prove them so. And if the Jacobites were right and the Hanoverians wrong about the old Pretender and what he would have done and been as King of England, that only makes more fatal Bolingbroke's failure of nerve which perhaps alone cost James III his throne. So there would be a good deal to be said for letting the author of the Patriot King stand on his wits as a profligate intellectual and intriguer without principles or staying power. As such he interested Voltaire and Disraeli, and was something of a hero to Chesterfield. "His manner of speaking," said that excellent judge, "in private conversation is just as elegant as in his writings."

KENNETH BELL

NOISY MANSIONS

Our Great Public Schools. By F. A. M. WEBSTER. *Ward, Lock.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The object of this book is to provide an exhaustive account of the traditions, customs and games of thirty-six "representative" public schools. It achieves that object. The selection of schools treated will cause some heartburnings. No Scottish or Quaker school is included and there seem to be some other odd omissions. However, the business of choosing must inevitably have been what Captain Webster would probably call "an invidious task."

The surprising thing about *Our Great Public Schools* is that it should have been written at all. It really needs Lowes Dickinson's John Chinaman or that tiresomely astonished creature the Man from Mars to review it properly. The chapters on each school contain an account of the school's history, individual customs, little language, and distinguished old boys. The notes on early history seem full and accurate, but Captain Webster fails to record the fact that most post-war public schools have gone through a boom and a slump. The black years of cotton and steel menaced the very existence of all of them except the greatest. It is odd to find recorded as important events in school history the visit by Queen Victoria and the unveiling of the stained glass window, but the tone in which "traditions" are described is odder still. The principal traditions in which the author is interested are those connected with clothing, slang, floggings, fights, O.T.C.s and games. Here is a cross-section of quotations. At Haileybury the prefects "are allowed to wear coloured pullovers and to carry sticks and use umbrellas"—strange symbols of authority. At Repton the big boys loved the headmaster "but the little fellows went in terror of him. Floggings and canings were both frequent and severe, but if Repton was a rough place under Macaulay, one must remember that his was the period of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*." At Eastbourne College "it is customary for about twelve of the senior members of the O.T.C. to be seconded for duty with a Senior Scout Troop, with a view to their becoming Scoutmasters in due course, and a Junior Troop has recently been founded for boys below O.T.C. age. This is in continuation of the School's policy of personal service and history-making." The number of V.C.s and dead contributed to the Great War by each school is noted, and the resultant war memorial described. For Merchant Taylors' "the small, simple memorial placed in the pavilion at Bellingham is the most valued of all, for thereon relatives and friends of those who died on active service were asked to come to the school and carve the names of their dead with their own hands." Ideas about education rarely occur in the book, but we are told that amongst the first steps taken by Philpotts, who became headmaster of Bedford School in 1874, "was the creation of a strong feeling of *esprit de corps* by the institution of a proper system of games." And "the fresh vitality which has flushed the veins" of the King's School, Ely, is attributed to Deans "who, whilst devoutly revering the study of the Classics, yet had no deep-rooted opposition to the Sciences."

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The greater part of this volume is given over to the achievements of boys and old boys in games and athletics. Blues, caps, and heroes of Olympic Games are solemnly listed at enormous length. Writers and such odds and ends, however, get an occasional mention. "Among the alumni of Shrewsbury have been Sir Philip Sidney, Ambrose Philips, the Marquis of Halifax, Judge Jeffreys, Sir Samuel Butler, the author of *Erewhon*, Charles Darwin, Stanley Weyman, the well-known writer of historical romances, and Lord Rochdale, formerly President of the British Olympic Association." The only possible comment on this seems to be (*sic*).

FREDERICK LAWS

SHORTER NOTICES

Letters to His Fiancée. By LÉON BLOY. *Sheed and Ward.* 5*s.*

It is a reflection on the state of many things that out of the works of a man so prolific as Léon Bloy his love-letters should be the first to be done into English. Léon Bloy was not a film-star.

These love-letters are magnificent. Everything Léon Bloy wrote is as good an introduction to him as anything else if approached in a suitable context. He was one of those disorderly egoists who bite and thunder continually at their persecutors and never finish anything. But here is his most serene writing. And the publication seems to have been designed with the purely negative intention of not offending the English faithful, the *bien-pensants* whom Léon Bloy in his lifetime was at pains to offend as much as possible. Messrs. Sheed and Ward have inserted a special publisher's note deprecating Léon Bloy's violence. Barbara Wall's naively charming translation tones down the text wherever possible, and her introduction might have been addressed to a gathering of Sunday-school teachers. The virtue of this critical introduction to Léon Bloy by a *croyant* Catholic is that it is on no account critical, and Mrs. Wall says about Léon Bloy precisely those things which Léon Bloy said about himself in his more amiable moments, Mélanie, Anne-Marie and all, crazy shepherdess and sainted prostitute-mistress, all, lock, stock and barrel. The reader more interested in experience than in the justification of experience will need, in fact, to make very strenuous efforts if he is to discover the features of Léon Bloy in this curious publication. But if he does not regularly read French books, let him do his best. Léon Bloy wrote a splendid French prose and had something near the most violent mind and will of the century's turn. This book will serve its purpose as a rather odd English introduction. Let us hope that the *Exégèse des lieux communs*, *La Femme pauvre* and *Le Sang du pauvre* will be undertaken by some enterprising publisher and introduced by disciples of Dr. Freud.

Economics in Outline. By ARTHUR BIRNIE. *Nelson.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

This brief primer of economics is addressed to the general reader rather than, as is more usual, to the student. Well and brightly written, clear in argument, and closely linked to the concrete realities of business and trade, it will appeal to the considerable public who find existing textbooks too purely academic, too diffuse, or too dull. Certainly any person starting from scratch and getting his information straight from Mr. Birnie can reasonably count on having acquired, by the time he has finished, a good working idea of the functioning of the economic system and of the main lines of economic problems. But such readers should be warned that Mr. Birnie does not avoid the sin of over-simplification without due warning—his first approximations are not labelled as such—and that he departs in many ways from orthodox theory, his arguments for the departure being highly unconvincing and appearing to result mainly from his own incomprehension of the theories he attacks. Both for these reasons and because of the somewhat peculiar arrangement of its subject matter, *Economics in Outline* is hardly suitable for students and teachers. The former would have, sooner or later, too much to unlearn, and the latter would have difficulty in fitting it to any known syllabus. But the busy—or frankly lazy—general reader, who wants merely "some idea of what it is all about" will find it just his cup of tea; and provided that he reads with a fairly sceptical mind, Mr. Birnie's deviations and idiosyncrasies will do him no serious harm.

Ebb and Flow in Trade Unionism. By LEO WOLMAN. *Macmillan.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

This able and cautious book about trade unions in the United States appears at a suitable moment in the history of the subject. The American labour movement is in the midst of an upheaval. The drive for industrial unionism on the lines now being laid by Mr. John L. Lewis, of the United Mineworkers of America, the most densely organised industrial union in the country, may well lead either to a fundamental change in American labour history, or it may pitchfork the United States into a spell of reaction. Mr. Wolman's careful study of the history of American trade unions from the end of the War down to the middle of last summer provides us with a stable background of facts and figures against which current speculations may be judged. Among the special characteristics of American trade unionism described by Mr. Wolman are the very small percentage of American workers who are in any way organised, the essentially "craft" nature of most unions, the competitive factors of "welfare capitalism" and undercutting in unorganised areas in so vast a country, the absence of a "class psychology" basis for the labour movement as a whole, the strong anti-unionism of employers and the very important part played by political and governmental factors during the last three years. These matters are examined with the aid of a wealth of valuable statistics and an appendix containing information about the leading unions and about trade unions in other countries. We are left with a feeling that American trade unionism has an immense way to go, but that its very insignificance leaves room for great elasticity of movement in the future.

Musical Memories. By HERMAN DAREWSKI. *Jarrolds.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Darewski was well known to theatre-goers during the war years, and many ex-soldiers will have pleasant memories of the revues which were enlivened by the gaiety of the music he wrote for them. In these memoirs he tells of his early adventures as a young composer struggling for recognition and of the vagaries of publishers, and as he is now a publisher himself his very practical advice to writers and musicians adventuring in the theatrical and gramophone worlds should prove useful. Mr. Darewski has many good stories to tell of the managers and performers he has known. Perhaps the best is that of Houdini, the famous escaper whom no bars or fetters could hold, and Datas, the memory man. Locked in a bedroom for a jest, Houdini could not get out, and Datas forgot their landlady's name.

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whole—refined a vehicle can be constructed for the money, unless the speculator were familiar with the interior of a modern factory, organised for flow production. In fact, the achievement still compels my reverent wonder, when I deduct from the really insignificant cheque which I paid for it, the enormous commission pocketed by the retailer, and the vast sums annually expended on various forms of publicity by the manufacturer. There seem to be so very few pounds left to cover the wages of labour and the purchase of raw materials, not to speak of such items as rent, rates, machinery, blackcoat salaries, interest on capital, and buildings.

On the whole, the car is quite satisfactory. It starts within two seconds of operating the starter, whatever the weather, although I perforce store it in a wooden garage devoid of heating. It is really well sprung, and rides with amazing smoothness over vile roads at speeds up to 25 m.p.h. It is capable of about 70 m.p.h. on top (though the manufacturer advertises 80 m.p.h. with the optimism characteristic of his breed). Its brakes are superb. It is very roomy, accommodating five people without cramping or involuntary physical contacts; and at normal speeds the rear seats are as comfortable as the front seats. Its lamps are excellent, and furnish adequate driving vision even when they are switched into their non-dazzle positions. The gear-change on the upper gears is foolproof; and first is hardly ever used. The equipment is so lavish that there is no incentive to add any further gadgets of any kind. Reliability so far has been absolute. No fumes penetrate the body; it can be driven fully closed in bad weather without generating headaches in its occupants, whilst ventilation can be arranged in a variety of ways to suit faddy passengers or to cope with any temperatures likely to be encountered in Great Britain. In mist or rain or snow the front screen is adequately scoured, and any problems of vision are purely lateral, and can be solved by treating the side windows with any of the chemical preparations sold for that purpose. The petrol consumption is reasonable, considering its weight and speed, and the oil consumption is ideal by present standards, as little lubricant need be added to the sump until the expiration of a mileage after which no oil can be regarded as any longer serviceable.

After this panegyric it sounds ungrateful to say that I am rather disappointed with the car, and find myself wishing I had selected a rival vehicle of roughly similar price, power, and characteristics. My discontents are mainly inspired by a feature which ought not to exist in a 1937 car. When the car is driven at over forty on top, the engine becomes decidedly rough. "Roughness" is a relative term; and drivers accustomed to some of the fussier small cars of the period might consider my engine deliciously smooth. But in actual fact at, say, 60 m.p.h. it is far less smooth than an engine sold by the same firm eight years ago; and far less smooth than many of its 1937 American competitors of equal power and of the same price. Moreover, at speeds exceeding 40 m.p.h. it creates an unusual degree of "wind roar." As it is not disfigured by more protuberances than other cars in its class, it is very difficult to identify the cause of these atmospheric noises; I can only say that its predecessor was a streamlined vehicle of pure British ancestry, and scarcely ever made one realise that motion created serious disturbances of the air. A third reason for disappointment is that it is extremely self-conscious when cornering. That, again, is a comparative matter. Its predecessor had been developed by years of racing, and could be flung round sharp, open corners very fast without any sensation of either effort or danger. This high and softly sprung machine seems to dislike corners. It cannot be steered to a hair; it will not corner fast; it demands hauling round bends; and on all bends it drives heavily like Pharaoh's chariots in the wet sands of the Red Sea. Fourthly, and here the manufacturer can hardly be blamed, it utilises very low tyre pressures, and is extremely sensitive to its tyre inflations, whilst the valves of its tyres leak worse than any tyre valves which have ever come under my maintenance, so that laborious work with a gauge and pump is a twice-a-week routine.

I ought not to grumble, I suppose, that lavish mudguarding and valancing render all the chassis lubrication details acrobatically inaccessible. When one attains a certain age, weight and limb-stiffness, the idea of crawling about on a probably rather soiled and oily floor becomes increasingly repellent. But it is quite impossible to maintain this car without the dual aid of a rectangle of old carpet, some 6ft. × 3ft., and a dungaree suit. Thus equipped, chassis lubrication remains rather tiresome, as the chassis possesses very little ground clearance, and a middle-aged belly does not readily penetrate beneath a low-hung frame. The fact is that all modern cars should theoretically possess one-shot chassis lubrication of an automatic character. So expensive an installation cannot decently be included at the price which I actually paid; and it is said with some justice that these delicate and complex arrangements are apt to prove illusive in use. One operates the central pump, and meekly trusts that a liberal jet or fine trickle of lubricant is reaching every scheduled item, whereas after so many miles or so many months it is long odds that something has snapped, or silted up. Still, such a deceptive paradise seems paradise, as compared with wriggling about supine on a very cold and rather greasy concrete floor. I suppose the truth is that all oldish men should be sufficiently wealthy to entrust routine jobs with grease guns to professional mechanics. Similar reasoning applies to the washing. The large cellulose-enamelled areas respond quite sleekly to hose and wax polish; but the spoked wheels are the very devil to keep clean. The silver plating is all equally tiresome; for the main chromiumed areas seem to have been rather cheaply and inefficiently plated, and threaten me with corrosion all too rapidly, whilst certain awkward and inaccessible details, both inside and outside the car, seem to have been finished in ordinary nickel, and turn orangey within twenty-four hours of a shower. Dear me! Am I turning Sybarite? I must unhook those dungarees, and get busy.

R. E. DAVIDSON

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RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, May 28th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 373

Set by Hamish Miles

The usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) are offered for an illustrative list of the five dark and unmistakable signs by which one can recognise the Bore, in *either* life *or* literature. The briefer the better, and no list to exceed 250 words.

Report by Hamish Miles

All too often, the theme was dismally infectious. Some entries read like clinical reports, and several simply recorded the competitors' personal dislike of certain opinions. On these the Mark of the Beast was hideously plain. One unscrupulous person quoted, without acknowledgment, Emerson's remark that "to inflict anyone with a compulsory interview of more than ten minutes indicates a crude state of civilisation," and is hereby warned off the turf. There was an affecting and obviously heartfelt entry from "Ciquet," of the Naval and Military Club; and commendation should also go to M. Chisholm, Euphoria (who used the Holmes-Watson formula), Spatchcock, R.S.J., R. K. Davis ("A claw-like hand with fingers poised to grapple the unwary prey by button-hole or lapel"), I. Drazin, and B. R. Gibbs. On the whole, I feel it would be fairest to divide the first prize between Richard Pomfret and Allan M. Laing, with Arnold Hyde as runner-up.

THE BORE IN LITERATURE—SIGNS OF

1. "Little did they know to what strange, almost incredible, adventures that chance happening would lead them. . . ."

2. "Mignonette . . . larks winging . . . new-mown hay . . . the cleanness of the wind upon one's brow. . . . ."

3. "We yield to no one in our admiration of . . . " (leading on to the Ultimate *But*).

4. "A silence fell on the little group gathered round the smoke-room fire. It was broken by Chisholm, who hitherto had taken little part in the conversation.

"'What you have been discussing,' he said in his calm, imperturbable tones, 'reminds me of a somewhat similar occurrence in which I was concerned (he paused slightly) many years ago. It was . . .'."

5. "Importuned by friends and acquaintances alike, I have at length been prevailed upon—much against my inclination, I confess—to set down these stray reminiscences of a lifetime spent in . . ."

RICHARD POMFRET

BY THESE WAYS SHALL YE KNOW THEM!

1. Jones's cue
   Is a table for two:
   He says: "Mind if I sit here?"
   And begins to bite your ear.
2. But Smith's attitude
   Is not so crude:
   His the unquiet eye in clubs,
   Reproachfully inviting snubs.
3. Wise men leave the room
   In gloom
   At the cry of Robinson:
   "Have you heard this one?"
4. One always dodges
   Comrade Hodges:
   His fat smile is the banner
   Of an excessively tedious manner.
5. And the trait
   That gives Brown away
   Is his criminal knack
   Of slapping one's back.

ALLAN M. LAING

UNMISTAKABLE SIGNS OF THE BORE.

In life:

1. ". . . and that *actually happened*."
2. "Well, I'll tell you *my* theory of the abdication . . . "
3. Insistence of an answer to rhetorical questions.

In literature:

4. The novel: An introduction ensuring that none of the subtleties shall be missed.

"In Major Saunders, I have endeavoured to place before the reader a character . . ."

5. The name "Wordsworth."

ARNOLD HYDE

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 229.—HITT AND MISS

By the Rt. Hon. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, M.P.

[*The answer to this ingenious problem will doubtless interest all our tennis-players. The problem itself should prove of exceptional interest to mathematicians.*—CALIBAN.]

I was umpiring recently in the —— lawn tennis tournament in a handicap single between Mr. Hitt and Mr. Miss. The referee had arranged for Mr. Hitt to give Mr. Miss 15 in every game. Unfortunately before the match was finished the rain came on and stopped it; but on the way back to the tent I looked at the score sheet which I had kept accurately and counted up the number of strokes that had been won by Hitt and the number won by Miss. Together they numbered 120. Inside the tent I gave my figures to the referee who said: "They could not have got nearer to the precise proportion which would justify me in allotting that handicap."

How many strokes were won by each player?

PROBLEM 227.—NUMBERWELL

Numberwell is 28.

The following amusing solution is from A. N. W. Saunders:

After a moment's reflection, I said: "I don't think much of your 'Naby' as a contribution to mathematical thought."

"No?" said Numberwell.

"Clearly every odd number is a Naby, except 1," I explained, "since it can be expressed in the form $1 + 2b$. Further every Naby is an odd number, except those whose component integers are both even."

"Quite," said he, "but think how easy it becomes to find which numbers are not Nabies."

"Yes," said I, "we can write down the even Nabies. Those whose smallest component integer is 2, take the form $3b + 2$ (b being even), i.e., the A.P. 8, 14, 20, 26, etc.; starting from 4 we get another series, 24, 34, 44, etc.; from 6, 48, 62, etc. Non-Nabies therefore are 1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 16, 18, 22, 28, etc. Reverting to your family, there can't be an infant of 1, or your grandfather's age would be an odd number, and the only way he can have 8 grandchildren gives their ages as the above numbers except 1 and 22, his age as 96, since all odd numbers and 90 are Nabies. So you, my energetic friend, are 28."

NOTE BY CALIBAN.

One competitor makes the point that "no two were born in the same year," might mean "no two were born in the same calendar year." (What *he* says, with the sublime confidence of youth, is "This is clearly the meaning of 'no two were born in the same year.'") I was of course aware of this technical ambiguity, which crops up in connection with every age problem, but I assumed that the context of this problem made it a reasonable inference that "no two were born in the same year" means "no two were born within twelve months of one another." At any rate this is the inference which has been drawn by every other solver, and the assumption made by me was fully justified.

I might add that my critic sends both answers, and of course will get full marks.

PROBLEM 226.—THE FIFTH FORM AT ST. LOVADUC'S

A set of Low's cartoons goes to: G. F. Hendy, 62 Avondale Road, Bromley, Kent. *Six* points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s*. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope but on separate sheets of paper.

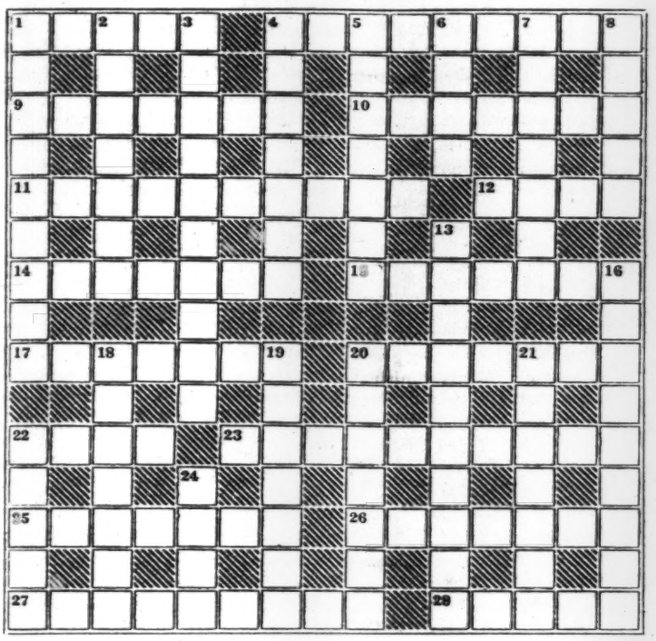
Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 376

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Hywel M. C. James, Henwick Lodge, Worcester

ACROSS.

1. A 22 down one finds noticeably enforced in any town.
4. Sounds like a dairy-maid's cosmetic.
9. The commonest telephone number it seems.
10. Condition of the musician when he gets merry.
11. One presumably needs a monkey wrench to deal with them.
12. Industrial examples.
14. Ten Hebrews shout.
15. Main adjective of the Elizabethans.
17. The canoeist does it without wetting his feet.
20. The average Englishman who gets through?
22. Result of a fortunate turn.
23. Fortified building, packed up as it were.
25. Food found in a maze.
26. A postillion always set off with this note.
27. Entertain men at tea on doctor's orders.
28. Makes us try.

DOWN.

1. A vessel that goes on the boil.
2. Their revolutions are dynamic.
3. Are the inhabitants hounded into these dwellings?
4. The adze can reshape it.
5. They may be *nati* or *a latere*.
6. The chief works in the kitchen without me.
7. Fed fine for an Ottoman.
8. These beasts are not shod with these.
13. Uncharitable work?
16. Presumably starts with a kick off.
18. Not all landladies do it when they take in people.
19. This vegetable would, you'd think, have been washed in salt water.
20. Meant to encircle Diana.
21. Part of his luggage was sent by mistake from Tripoli to Teschen.
22. See 1 across.
24. Necessary for a metric understanding of poetry, no doubt.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

L	E	A	F	L	E	S	S	■	P	R	I	S	E	D
I	■	L	■	U	■	H	■	■	E	■	T	■	I	■
A	R	M	E	N	I	A	■	B	A	L	K	A	N	S
B	■	O	■	C	■	R	■	R	■	A	■	M	■	P
L	O	N	G	H	O	P	■	O	U	T	S	I	Z	E
E	■	E	■	E	■	P	■	K	■	E	■	N	■	R
■	■	R	E	S	E	R	V	E	D	S	E	A	T	S
A	■	■	■	■	■	A	■	N	■	■	■	■	■	E
S	H	A	D	O	W	C	A	B	I	N	E	T	■	■
S	■	R	■	N	■	T	■	O	■	O	■	A	■	P
A	S	S	A	G	A	I	■	T	A	M	A	B	L	E
U	■	E	■	U	■	C	■	T	■	I	■	A	■	N
L	I	N	E	A	G	E	■	L	O	N	G	R	U	N
T	■	A	■	R	■	■	E	■	A	■	E	■	■	E
S	A	L	A	D	S	■	I	S	O	L	A	T	E	D

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By DIVES

POLITICAL MARKETS—WALL STREET—OIL RESULTS

WE are destined, it appears, to have "political" markets with us for some time ahead. Not that Throgmorton Street's or Wall Street's preoccupations are deeply concerned with developments in the sphere of international relations. In both cases the political factors, whose influence on market psychology is illustrated by lack of business and sagging prices, lie at home. While investors in the U.S.A. watch nervously the "set-up" in the contests between President Roosevelt and the Supreme Court, and Mr. John L. Lewis and the "independent" steel producers, the London Stock Exchange is dominated by uncertainties surrounding not merely the labour situation in the coalfields and the L.P.T.B. area but, even more important, the intentions of Mr. Chamberlain. To begin with, the City feels that the Chancellor should take an early opportunity of making a much more explicit statement of British policy with regard to gold and the price level. Though fears of an immediate reduction in the $35 per ounce U.S. buying price for gold have temporarily died down, it is still by no means clear how far Whitehall is prepared actively to co-operate with Washington in "sterilising" excessive offerings of gold, or what measure of agreement exists between the two Administrations on the real issue underlying the gold question—the level to which it is desired that prices should ultimately rise. Rumours that Sweden, in pursuit of an independent price policy, may decide to leave the sterling *bloc*, have added to uncertainties in the monetary field. More closely affecting British equities, however, is the still unsettled matter of "N.D.C." taxation. Under a barrage of reasoned protests from trade associations, the Chancellor is believed to have retreated considerably from his initial position, but unless the Finance Bill next week reveals drastic modifications of the original proposals, investors in "vulnerable" concerns may have further unpleasant market shocks. Meanwhile the best that can be said of the general trend of security-values is that forced selling by speculators caught out by the April set-back appears to be nearing an end. Gradual liquidation of untenable "positions" has continued, but in an orderly fashion.

* * *

The disappointment of the week is Wall Street. It is no longer possible for American stock-brokers to put the blame on selling from London. Their common stock prices sink while London is crowning a King or celebrating a Bank Holiday. According to the Dow Jones indices industrial equities have fallen since March 10th by 14 per cent. Measured from the low levels of March, 1936, they have lost more than a third of their gains, which, according to the chart theorists, is greater than a normal major reaction in a "bull" market. What is wrong with Wall Street? There is, of course, some anxiety about labour and the continuance of sporadic strikes; there is also some expectation of a summer recession in business greater than usual. But it is idle to pretend that the American trade recovery as a whole is in any way less robust than it was. Industrial output shows no recession; the machine-tool industry (a good index of general industrial activity) reports more orders booked in April than at any time since the recovery began; and the construction contracts awarded since May 1st indicate a larger rate of gain in total building activity than has been reported in the first four months of the year. Politically, Mr. Roosevelt appears less menacing to the stock markets. There are no inflationary signs in commodity or security markets which would tempt him to interfere. Even if he persists in his plans for reforming the Supreme Court, the prosperity of American industry is not dependent on protection by five venerable Justices. There appears, therefore, no reason why an investor should not buy sound American equity stocks at the present "sold-out" prices ruling in Wall Street. The following table gives some examples of dividend yields now obtainable:

	Highest 1937.	Present Price.	1936 Earnings.	1936 Divs.	Dividend Yield %
American Smelting ..	105½	84½	6.85	4.05*	4.79
General Motors ..	76⅜	56½	5.36	4.50*	7.96
Northern American ..	35½	23½	1.77	1.50*	6.38
Standard Oil of Indiana	49⅞	43½	3.09	2.40	5.51
Union Pacific Railroad	149¾	143	8.20	6.00	4.20

* Including extras.

The speculator, as opposed to the investor, may wait for some definite outside lead before taking a plunge into the American stock markets, but the investor should take the long view.

* * *

The oil dividend season opened with a surprisingly good declaration by the Burmah Oil Company—a final dividend of 17½ per cent. with a cash bonus of 5 per cent., making 27½ per cent. for the year against 20 per cent. in 1935. The cash bonus of 5 per cent., which was entirely unexpected in the market, is perhaps intended to express the directors' calm confidence in the face of threatened competition from Bahrein oil. The market is now more hopeful of a final dividend of 12½ per cent. tax free on the increased capital of Shell Transport Trading, making 20 per cent. tax free for the year, and is talking of a 20 per cent. share bonus, with the final dividend, for the shareholders of Anglo-Iranian Oil. The Mexican Eagle report, with an extra dividend of 1*d.*, making 11*d.* per share, was certainly not exciting, but no one expected the directors to pay a bumper dividend while they are having a wages dispute with their Mexican employees. The labour truce in the company's oilfields and refineries expires in a week's time, and a strike is not impossible. The recent large increases announced in the company's weekly crude-oil production returns may indicate the directors' intelligent anticipation of labour trouble. Canadian Eagle's results were much more satisfactory, the dividend being increased by 2*d.* to 11*d.* per share. This company ships petrol to Shell-Mex in Great Britain and receives the British wholesale price. As the latter has risen by 1½*d.* per gallon this year to keep step with the rise in tanker freight rates, Canadian Eagle must be enjoying bumper earnings. The table appended shows yields on leading oil shares.

	Price.	1935 Div. %	Est. 1936 Div. %	Gross Yield % on Est. Div.
Shell Transport £1 ..	5 11/16	17½ net	20 net*	£4 13 9
Anglo-Iranian £1 ..	6¼	15	20	£3 4 0
Burmah Oil £1	5 5/8 cd	20	27½†	£5 6 3‡
Trinidad Leaseholds £1	6 13/16	25	35	£5 2 9

Year ending June.

* On increased capital. † Actual. ‡ Equivalent gross, after allowing for tax at 3/3.

If satisfactory declarations are maintained, oil shares may lead the much-needed stock market recovery.

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THE tenth ordinary general meeting of the British Match Corporation, Limited, was held on May 18th at River Plate House, London, E.C.

Mr. C. E. Bartholomew, O.B.E. (Chairman and Managing Director), presided.

The Chairman said (in part): Ladies and Gentlemen, We are pleased to be able to present a satisfactory account of our tenth year's work. The comparative figures in the accounts which are before you show no sensational changes, but they do show steady progress and increasing stability.

In the accounts for 1928 the total value of all our assets appeared as £6,238,136. In the following year the Brazilian business was added with an addition of just over £700,000 to our capital, and the assets came to £7,055,443. To-day they are £7,809,000, although we have written off £360,000 from the goodwill item. It is our intention to write off that item altogether by allocations from profits each year.

Thanks mainly to special bonus dividends from Bryant and May, Limited—our principal operating Company—we have amassed a reserve account of £700,000. This is all invested in fixed-dated British Government securities, whose cost is just below their redemption price. The holdings in subsidiary and associated Companies have yielded a very satisfactory return.

As you will remember, the Brazilian investment has been a cause of some anxiety to your Directors, but there has been a substantial improvement in the conditions of that country, and if these improved conditions continue, that anxiety will be removed.

We have been glad to increase our interests in the Argentine, where exchange conditions have improved, for we have confidence, not only in that wonderful country, but also in the management of our associates there.

HOME TRADE

In the home trade we have held our own, in spite of a continuance of the abnormal competition from Soviet Russia to which I referred last year. This has been carried on with no regard to profit, but the business has not grown in volume owing to competition from other imported matches.

Our Dominion investments have all been remunerative once more.

The Revenue Account shows the second highest net revenue which we have yet achieved, and there is an increase in all the items on the right side of that account, except in Transfer and Registration Fees. This figure shows that the shares are well held, for we have passed only just under 2,000 transfers in the year, although there are more than 10,000 shareholders. This stable shareholding seems to us to justify our policy of endeavouring to fortify reserves and to eliminate unsubstantial assets from our Balance-Sheet, with a view to a gradual increase in the real value of your investment, regardless of market fluctuations.

N. D. C.

Chairmen of industrial concerns are expected just now to offer their views on the quaintly-named National Defence Contribution. My considered opinion must be reserved until we can see the details of this new and milder form of the crude Excess Profits Duty, which did so much mischief in its hasty war-time guise. In principle, I consider the new tax quite unfair, unless it can be confined only to those who are making excess profits from the Government's necessary re-armament programme.

I find myself quite unable to endorse even the principle of a tax, which calls upon A.B. and C. for additional payments towards the defence of the country from which X.Y. and Z. derive similar security and benefit at smaller cost.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

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GLOBE. The Constant Wife. Wed. & Thurs.

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HIS MAJESTY'S. Balalaika. Wed. & Sat.

MERCURY. In Theatre Street. Sat.

PLAYHOUSE. Whiteoaks. Wed., Thurs., Sat.

ST. MARTIN'S. A Ship Comes Home. T., F.

SAVILLE. Over She Goes. Sats.

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